



Image Press Agency / BACKGRID USA



Tragic Hayden's 'overdose' death

PAGES
8-9

FANG
FANG
BANG
BANG



Disgraced ex-rep.
Eric Swalwell
confessed to sex
with suspected
China spy

Former Democratic Congressman Eric Swalwell admitted to sleeping with Christine Fang, also known as Fang Fang, once in an Ambien-induced haze, newly released FBI records show. The FBI suspected Fang was a Chinese agent and considered recruiting her as a double agent.

PAGES 4-5

#1 IN THE U.S. FOR NEUROLOGY & NEUROSURGERY.



**Five years in a row.
2026, 2025, 2024, 2023, 2022.**

It takes an obsessive pursuit of excellence to deliver the best patient outcomes in treating neurological conditions. Our integrated teams maintain one of the lowest neurosurgical mortality rates in the U.S., and the fastest stroke intervention rate in all of New York.

Better health starts with a better health system.



**Learn more about
what makes us #1**



COVID'S SOCIAL ILLNESS

Made Gen Z shut-ins

Lana Condor catches the wind while out walking Monday in Murray Hill. The Vietnamese-born 29-year-old actress most recently starred in "Coyote vs. Acme," a combo live action and animated comedy based on the Looney Tunes character. Condor also starred this year in "Pretty Lethal," playing a member of a ballet troupe whose bus breaks down — forcing the dancers to fight their way to safety after they're targeted by armed men.

**Breezy
does it
for Lana**

weren't socializing face-to-face on a daily basis, but by the time COVID restrictions had eased in late 2021, that figure was almost 9%.

The figure peaked at 10% in 2023, before ticking down slightly

in 2024 and 2025.

And where the most socially active segment of young people saw their social lives rebound following the pandemic, for the bottom quarter, they have not.

Before 2020, the most socially connected segment of young adults used to spend 87% of their day with other people, a figure that dropped to 78% during COVID restrictions, before rising to 83% as of 2025.

But for the most isolated segment of the young adult population, who used to spend roughly a third of their day with others, that figure collapsed to essentially zero during the pandemic and has stayed there ever since.

The annual American Time Use Survey also found Americans are spending more time on screens than they were in 2015, with daily time spent on computers and social media rising from 25 minutes a decade ago to 37 minutes in 2025.

Teenagers spent the most time on these pursuits, averaging 90 minutes per day on screens.

Also astonishing was that more than a third (35%) of those employed said they did some or all of their work from home in 2025, over three years after COVID restrictions started to eased.

By
ANTHONY
BLAIR

COVID created a permanent class of young shut-ins, according to a stunning new report.

Nearly 10% of Gen Zers said they had zero face-to-face interactions with another person in their daily life, according to an analysis of US Census data by the Financial Times.

The dangerous trend was triggered by the COVID pandemic, when millions of young people were kept stuck inside during the years spent developing crucial social skills.

Still haven't recovered

The American Time Use Survey suggested that a shocking number of these young people — ages 23 to 29 — haven't recovered.

In 2019, the last year before the pandemic, only 3% of young adults

ANIMAL HOUSE

Pol 'barely remembers' tryst with

By JOSH CHRISTENSON
and STEVEN NELSON

WASHINGTON — The House Ethics Committee is investigating Rep. Jimmy Gomez (D-Calif.) for “inappropriate sexual contact with a House staffer” — after he admitted to cheating on his wife following a Post exposé that revealed Gomez kissed a much younger aide three years ago.

The probe, announced by the bipartisan panel Monday, threatens to drag in prominent Democrats as witnesses — including Gomez’s former roommate Sen. Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.) — and adds fuel to efforts to further restrict sexual conduct between elected officials and subordinates.

Gomez copped to having an affair in June, confessing to “personal mistakes outside my marriage that have caused real pain to my wife and family,” in a statement to CNN that characterized the extramarital relations as “consensual.”

“I sincerely apologize to my wife, family, friends and the people that I have the privilege to serve,” the 51-year-old said at the time.

Hot and heavy

The Post reported April 18 that Gomez got hot and heavy with a House staffer two decades his junior outside a backyard party at then-Rep. Eric Swalwell’s (D-Calif.) DC residence in the summer of 2023.

The married Dads Caucus founder had an 11-month-old child at home and initially denied sharing a passionate moment



Getty Images

UNFAITHFUL: Rep. Jimmy Gomez admitted to cheating on his wife, leading to an investigation by the House Ethics Committee.

with the woman, then-Swalwell aide Yardena Wolf, against a car outside her boss’ house.

It’s unclear whether the Ethics Committee is investigating other relationships Gomez may have had with congressional aides.

Swalwell, Gallego and Gomez formed a so-called “Cool Kids Clique” prior to their collective disgrace and were known for heavy drinking and womanizing, including at Swalwell’s DC pad.

Gallego privately admitted to sexual relationships with at least

two House aides working for different members of Congress, The Post reported last month.

The House of Representatives banned members from having relationships with their own staffers in 2018 at the height of the #MeToo movement — after four lawmakers resigned following allegations of misconduct.

House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.) last month endorsed a bipartisan proposal to ban all sexual conduct between lawmakers and House staff.

Campaign \$\$ probe dropped

WASHINGTON — A three-year FBI probe into then-Rep. Eric Swalwell determined suspected Chinese spy Fang Fang helped solicit illegal campaign donations — but the investigation was dropped for “national security reasons,” according to bureau files declassified by the White House on Monday.

An undercover operation targeted the California Democrat between May 2014 and May 2017 following a tip that “internships in Congressman Eric Swalwell’s offices were promised in exchange for campaign

contributions,” according to a June 10, 2014, FBI memo.

“As part of the scheme to purchase internships, campaign contributions were conduited through third parties to mask the true identity of the donor and in some cases made by foreign nationals in violation of federal criminal law,” noted the memo.

FBI agents conducted interviews with Swalwell, unidentified campaign donors and others in the congressman’s orbit — but were unable to substantiate the quid-pro-quo allegations.

However, the investigation

did uncover evidence that Fang — who also went by Christine Fang — broke the law by soliciting illegal straw donations from foreign nationals, destroyed records, made false statements, smuggled cash and acted as an unregistered foreign agent, presumably for China, according to a May 2, 2017, bureau memo.

“Fang left the United States . . . and has been barred from re-entry,” that memo added.

The FBI had hoped to indict Swalwell and Fang for campaign finance law violations, but neither was charged. *Josh Christenson*

By ANNIE GAUS
and JOSH KOEHN

Eric Swalwell confessed to a prescription drug-fueled sex romp with a suspected Chinese spy, according to newly released FBI files that confirm for the first time the disgraced former congressman got physical with Beijing’s purported honeypot.

The former California congressman had “physical relations” with Christine Fang, also known as “Fang Fang,” on at least two occasions, according to investigative files made public Monday by the White House Transparency Task Force.

On one occasion, Fang showed up at Swalwell’s apartment late one night demanding to be let in, with the Democrat admitting the two “hooked up” after he had taken

Ambien — his explanation for barely remembering the tryst.

A former Swalwell campaign aide told FBI agents in a May 1, 2015, interview that Fang was “very flirtatious” and boasted to Swalwell “that she was not wearing any underwear” upon arriving at his doorstep unannounced.

Swalwell, whose career and campaign for California governor imploded in April after accusations of rape and sexual assault by multiple women, was interviewed at the FBI’s Oakland outpost in 2015, as Fang became the subject of a counterintelligence investigation over her relationships with Bay Area and national political figures.

‘Late in the evening’

Swalwell, now 45, claimed to the FBI that both of his encounters with Fang took place at his apartment “probably before he was first elected to Congress in 2012.”

“One night FANG came over late in the evening and started banging on SWALWELL’s door,” the document states. “SWALWELL let her in and she and SWALWELL hooked up. FANG left after a couple hours.”

“SWALWELL barely remembers the event because he had taken an Ambien prior to FANG arriving,” according to the document, clarifying that he “takes Ambien to help him sleep.”

According to interview notes, Swalwell — a Dublin City Council member before his election to Congress — told investigators he and Fang had “casual” relations and often texted.

The files were posted months after Swalwell accused the Trump administration of meddling in the California governor’s race following FBI Director Kash Patel teasing the release of the files in late March.

Swalwell’s links to Fang were first reported by Axios in December 2020, and led to then-House Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) booting him from the Intelligence Committee in January 2023.

Fang, believed to be an operative for the Chinese Communist Party, helped organize fundraisers for Swalwell in Las Vegas and California, according to a witness.



Facebook

HONEYPOT: Christine Fang, a.k.a. Fang Fang, was allegedly a Chinese spy who targeted US politicians.

Fang repeatedly encouraged Swalwell to visit China — even extending an invitation to Swalwell’s father and his family following the congressman’s 2014 re-election, according to newly declassified documents.

“Neither Swalwell’s father nor his family traveled to China,” investigators wrote. Sara Azari, an attorney for Swalwell, who is under investigation by the Fair Political Practices Commission, blasted the document dump Monday as old news.

“There is nothing new here,” Azari said in a statement. “The government’s own memorandum confirms what Congressman Swalwell has said for more than a decade: he did nothing wrong, and there was no basis to charge him with any offense.”

She added: “An investigation that produced no charges and no finding of wrongdoing should not be resurrected years later as a vehicle for political retaliation.”

“The facts have not changed. Only the political motive for publicizing them has. That should concern anyone who believes federal law enforcement must remain independent of political retribution.” Fang is believed to have returned to China in mid-2015 as an FBI investigation into allegations she solicited illegal campaign donations for Swalwell and acted as an unregistered foreign agent reached an advanced stage.

Chinese 'spy' after taking Ambien



COZY: Fang Fang attends a California State University event in 2012 with Eric Swalwell while helping raise funds for his first House campaign.

'SLEEPER' AGENT FOR SWAL

FBI eyed Fang as informant Recruit bid led to probe

By RYAN KING
and JOSH CHRISTENSON

WASHINGTON — The FBI stumbled on disgraced ex-Rep. Eric Swalwell's affair with Chinese spy Fang Fang when the bureau tried to recruit her to be a double-agent, bombshell documents reveal.

Swalwell even joked that his paramour, whose English name is Christine Fang, worked for the Chinese Communist Party's Ministry of State Security, according to declassified documents released Monday by the White House Government Transparency Task Force.

"Congressman Eric SWALLOW ... commented that [Fang] was suspected as associated with the 'Chinese CIA' [MSS], albeit in a joking manner," a 2013 FBI memo said. "[Fang] further joked that all MSS officers were either old men or ladies, therefore, she could not be MSS.

"[Fang] remarked that the MSS would have hired prostitutes instead of using an MSS officer directly to entice the officials," it added.

Two years later, Swalwell told the feds he had sex with Fang, which raised alarm bells because of his position on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

Swalwell confessed in 2015 to "physical relations with Fang on a handful of occasions," according to the FBI docs.

Republican House leadership

briefly booted him from the committee, but Democrats later put him back on it.

The 2013 memo revealed that an undercover FBI agent explored the possibility of recruiting Fang — given the code name "Rusty Thumbs" — to a cutout company apparently run by the bureau.

"RT advised that she would be able to 'use her sexuality on politicians' if she wished to because she was 'young and pretty,'" the memo said. "RT further explained that she also had an opportunity to marry rich in Beijing, but chose not to because she wanted to find her own path."

Officials knew at the time that Fang, whose parents were both Chinese intelligence officers, had "affiliations" with Beijing's spy agency and noted she gave inconsistent accounts of her parents' retirement plans as well as "ambiguous" statements about her past.

Part of what fueled the feds' belief that they could convert Fang to work as a double agent was their belief that her "motivations appear to be centered on money and power."

They also found she exhibited "certain egotistical/narcissistic traits which may impact her suitability as a source" — and in March 2014 concluded Fang could not be trusted to provide information on China.

Six days later, the FBI opened a probe into Swalwell over Fang's access to him.

Dem Bruce bucks

By CARL CAMPANILE
and MATT TROUTMAN

She's breaking for Bruce.
A dyed-in-the-wool Democratic donor who previously contributed to Gov. Hochul's campaign is raising funds for her Republican gubernatorial opponent Bruce Blakeman, The Post has learned.
Bonnie Englehardt Lautenberg, a professional photographer and philanthropist who's the widow of late New Jersey Democratic Sen. Frank Lautenberg, plans to hold a fundraiser for Blakeman's campaign, she confirmed Monday.
"It's the talk of the Hamptons," said one Democrat who expressed surprise. "It's a good get for Bruce."
The tongue-wagging switcheroo is all the more surprising given that Lautenberg, 79, donated \$1,000 to Democratic incumbent Hochul's re-election campaign in July 2025, records show.
Lautenberg's Hochul handout was among hundreds of thousands of dollars she has forked over to Democratic causes over the part decade, including to campaigns for Kamala Harris and Hillary Clinton, a review of federal filings shows.
The deep-pocketed artist confirmed to The Post that she's holding a fundraiser for Blakeman — a conservative who counts President Trump as a personal friend — but said little more.
"It's true," Lautenberg said.
"Bruce is a longtime friend and neighbor. He's a great guy."
She had no further comment.
Blakeman said, "I am honored to have the support of Bonnie Lautenberg in my campaign for governor."
Lautenberg's late husband Frank Lautenberg, the last World War II veteran in the Senate and stalwart old-school liberal, died in 2013.
The photographer credited her spouse with teaching the "equivalent of a Ph.D. in political sci-



SWITCH: Bonnie Lautenberg (with then-President Joe Biden) will host a fundraiser for Bruce Blakeman (right) in the Hamptons.

Will raise cash for Blakeman

Getty Images

ence," according to a 2019 interview with Hamptons.com.
Her art often champions liberal causes, such as a piece exhibited during a 2022 Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU show that depicted the Statue of Liberty in tears after Roe v. Wade was overturned.
Other artwork reflects Lautenberg's concern for Israel, which she detailed in the Hamptons.com interview.
"I chose to use the mountain

regions of Israel and the glaciers and ice of Antarctica together to demonstrate the surprising similarities between the energy in each environment," she told the outlet. "Both regions are politically charged between global warming and the ice melt and the politics of Israel surrounded by so many enemies."
Many Jewish Democrats in New York have been concerned by the rise of Democratic Socialists of America pols such as



Steven Hirsch

Mayor Mamdani who are sharply critical of Israel.
The moderate Dem Hochul endorsed Mamdani during last year's mayoral race and remains a supportive ally, despite their political differences and behind-the-scenes tensions.
Campaign finance records show Lautenberg donated to far more Democratic candidates than just Hochul, Harris and Clinton in recent years.
She also made donations to campaigns for New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker, Arizona Sen. Mark Kelly, Georgia Sen. Jon Ossoff, Long Island Rep. Laura Gillen and Democratic congressional candidate Robert Zimmerman, as well as Democratic Party state committees across the country, records show.

Hochul campaign spokesperson Ryan Radulovacki said: "We're proud that New Yorkers from across all 62 counties, with an average online donation of twenty bucks, are standing with Governor Hochul in her fight to bring down the cost of housing, childcare, car insurance and more and stop her 'MAGA all the way' opponent from letting Donald Trump attack New York, jack up prices and threaten public safety."

Lawler's backed by blue

Law enforcement unions are sticking by New York Rep. Mike Lawler as he faces a tough battle to retain his crucial House seat in the Hudson Valley.
The formal endorsements of 11 unions and other police organizations covering state and local police departments are a critical boost for the Republican two-term congressman as he squares off against Democrat Cait Conley.
"Rockland, Putnam, Dutchess and Westchester Counties remain among the safest places in America to live and raise a family," Lawler noted, flanked by cops in Haverstraw Monday.
"It doesn't happen by accident, it happens because of the people standing behind me," he said.
The groups endorsing Lawler (below) include the Police Conference of New York, Rockland County PBA, Port Authority PBA and New York State Fraternal Order of Police, as well as the Haverstraw and Carmel PBAs amongst others.
Recent polling shows Lawler and Conley statistically neck-and-neck ahead of the November election.
Vaughn Golden



INSIDE TODAY

News Columns

- Nicole Gelinas 15
- Gossip**
- Page Six 18
- Cindy Adams 20
- Weather p. 20**
- Fun & Games**
- Horoscope 28
- Su Doku 32

- Crosswords 32
- Post Opinion p. 29-31**
- Business p. 33-35**
- Classifieds p. 36**
- Sports p. 36-53**
- Post Action 40-41
- Joel Sherman 50
- Television p. 54-55**

LOTTERY

NEW YORK

- Midday Nos. Mon.: 003
- Midday Win-4 Mon.: 8370
- Midday Take-5 Mon.: 15, 18, 19, 26, 32
- Evening Nos. Mon.: 952
- Evening Win-4 Mon.: 5231
- Evening Take-5 Mon.: 23, 25, 31, 36, 37
- Pick-10 Mon.: 4, 13, 18, 21, 23, 30, 31, 37, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 50, 59, 60, 61, 67, 68, 78
- Millionaire for Life Mon.:

- 3, 6, 33, 42, 48; MB: 4
- Powerball Mon.: 8, 15, 25, 49, 65; PB: 22; PP: x4;
- DP: 13, 34, 39, 45, 56; PB: 2
- NEW JERSEY**
- Pick-3 Mon.: 335; Fireball: 7
- Pick-4 Mon.: 4177; Fireball: 7
- Cash-5 Xtra Mon.: 10, 15, 30, 32, 40; Xtra: x2
- Pick-6 Mon.: 4, 8, 13, 16, 27, 38; DP: 6, 13, 24, 25, 27, 43
- CONNECTICUT**
- Play-3 Mon.: 726; Wild: 1
- Play-4 Mon.: 6203; Wild: 7
- Cash-5 Mon.: 7, 9, 10, 18, 32

POST CONTACTS

- Editorial**
- Main Office (212) 930-8000
- News Tips (212) 930-8500
- Sports Desk (212) 930-8700
- Circulation and Home Delivery**
- Customer Service (800) 552-7678
- Mail subscription & back issues only:**
- Phone 1-888-208-4157 or contact New York Post, P.O. Box 1407, Bellmawr, NJ, 08099. Foreign and domestic mail subscription rates available upon request to the Publishers Information Center, Inc.

- Postmaster:** Send address changes to The New York Post, 1211 Ave. of the Americas, NY, NY 10036-8790.
- Vol. 225 No. 276 Copyright 2026, NYP Holdings Inc. (USPS-383200)
- Published daily by NYP Holdings Inc., 1211 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10036-8790.
- Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional offices. The Post uses recycled paper.



ANENBERG-POMA
Gruesomely wounded.

No 'Gray' area in attack

An outraged witness ripped The New York Times for downplaying Friday night's attack on Central Synagogue, "perverting the reality that an extremely violent and frightening incident" took place inside a place of worship, and "diluting the true story and subtext."

Harry Zimmerman, 70, fired off a lengthy Facebook screed condemning the Gray Lady's reporting of the attack on the high-profile synagogue that left congregant Michele Anenberg-Poma with gruesome wounds and a security guard assaulted.

"I cannot emotionally consolidate ... the difference between what I witnessed from a few feet away and how The New York Times decided to describe the event," he wrote, saying the paper deceptively downplayed the event by describing the attack as "interrupt[ing]" worshippers and "rattl[ing]" New Yorkers."

Doree Lewak

'Mega' find for dad, son

It was a jaw-some find.

A massive tooth from a prehistoric megalodon — the largest shark to ever live, popularized in horror-movie lore — was discovered along the Jersey Shore by a vacationing father-son duo from Pennsylvania.

Michael Bowers, 42, said he discovered the fossil from the 3.6 million-year-old beast while visiting Sea Isle City with his son Bo, 11, last Tuesday.

"I always seem like I find crazy stuff in the water," Bowers told NJ.com.

David DeTurris

KID COURAGEOUS



Teen lifeguard hailed by prez

By NINA JOUDEH

The heroic teen lifeguard who risked his life to save a 10-year-old boy from pounding waves was hailed by President Trump in the Oval Office on Monday — with the boy he rescued by his side.

Ryder Williams, 16, saved Nathaniel Rai from the treacherous surf at Seabright State Beach in Santa Cruz, Calif., on July 25 as powerful waves crashed over them.

"What you did was incredible, and everybody saw it," Trump told Williams, praising the teen as a role model for young Americans.

"Maybe lifeguards don't get the credit they deserve," Trump said.

Williams also expressed he wanted to be a firefighter when he's older to which Trump replied "We'll give recommendations," with a smile.

Lifesaving act

Williams saved 10-year-old Rai from the pounding surf in a dramatic rescue that was captured on video, showing Williams' heroic effort as he kept the young boy above water. The video went viral shortly after the rescue and caught the attention of Eric Trump.

Rai and his father were also present at the Oval Office meeting, where Rai's father expressed his gratitude to Williams and to Trump for hosting the event.

"We're going to bring this heroic young man and his family into the



A TRUE HERO: California lifeguard Ryder Williams, 16, is recognized by President Trump Monday at the White House after a video went viral of his bravery (left) in saving 10-year-old Nathaniel Rai, who also attended the ceremony in the Oval Office.

White House with, perhaps, the boy he saved, to give him a High Civilian Honor. Very brave, he deserves it!" Trump posted about the rescue days after it happened.

Williams recently opened up about the terrifying moments when he realized the child's life was slipping away in a video interview posted to social media.

"As I grab the child, he goes limp, so I'm thinking about if he's unconscious or not that I really need to go in," Williams said.

The rookie lifeguard saw the young boy get swept away in ankle-deep water, grabbing his gear and sprinting into surf with waves up to 10-feet tall.

"The challenges for this rescue was that it was so close in, fins were ineffective," he said.

The closer he got, the more des-

perate the situation became.

"I was unable to pull him out because he was limp and the waves were pushing so hard," Williams said. "The whole time I was thinking, 'I just need to hold my position until my partner can get here because I'm not going to be able to get him out on my own.'"

As beachgoers rushed into the surf to help, Williams ordered them back to shore. Another lifeguard soon reached the pair.

"My partner mostly takes over holding the child because at this point, my arms were very exhausted from holding on," Williams recalled. "I still support him as much as I can as we drag him out of the water."

Nathaniel's father, Sumit Rai, has credited Williams' quick actions with saving his son's life.

"Gratefully, he's alive. It's a miracle," Rai told the California Post. "I'm so grateful to that lifeguard, Ryder. Two more seconds he gets thrown another 15-20 feet," Rai added. "You can't see him, let alone rescue him."

Family's gratitude

After reaching shore, Nathaniel coughed up sand and remained in shock.

"My son told me that he drowned and my son told me that he went unconscious," Rai said. "He was very subdued, still in a state of shock."

For Williams, the dramatic rescue was simply part of the job.

"That is just a part of our daily task to do. We can keep the public safe. That's the reason we were on the beach," he said.

Rather than calling it a day after the high-stakes rescue, Williams climbed back into his lifeguard tower.

"I returned to my tower after the rescue and continued to make safety contacts and ended up making more rescues later that day."

Williams also emphasized that saving lives is a team effort. "Together that day, we had many units on and all the tower staff. All the towers are making constant safety contacts with the units driving through to support us. Without working together, we would not be able to make many of the rescues we do."

Coroners complete Panettiere autopsy

By TERESA ROCA

One Life to Live



Heroes



Nashville



Scream 4



Tragic actress Hayden Panettiere suffered a cardiac arrest following a suspected overdose while staying at an Airbnb rental in South Carolina, according to chilling 911 dispatch audio obtained Monday by Page Six.

First responders rushed to the luxury apartment complex in Greenville after one of Panettiere's friends called 911 at 1:51 p.m. on Sunday — but the “Nashville” and “Heroes” star was declared dead about 40 minutes later.

EMTs found Panettiere in “cardiac arrest,” and she could not be saved, dying just five days before her 37th birthday.

The Greenville County, SC, Coroner's Office confirmed that Panettiere, who grew up north of the Big Apple in the village of Pierrmont, was “found unresponsive inside the residence, where she had been temporarily staying.”

“No signs of trauma were discovered that would have contributed to the death,” the statement further read.

Panettiere's cause and manner of death are pending further investigation.

“This investigation remains active and ongoing. No further details are available for release at this time.”

The “Remember the Titans” actress' death was announced by her grieving father, Alan “Skip” Panettiere.

“It is with profound sadness that we share the tragic passing of our beloved Hayden,” said Skip, who still lives in Rockland County, NY.

“She was an incredible light and a force of nature who brought immeasurable love and joy to all who knew her — and to the millions who watched her onscreen. We ask for privacy as our family takes time to process this unimaginable loss.”

In 911 dispatch audio obtained by Page Six, authorities said they



TRAGIC: Hayden Panettiere (above in her final Instagram post with Randall Slavin from 15 years ago) was staying in a South Carolina Airbnb with on-again, off-again boyfriend Brian Hickerson (below).

were responding to an apparent “overdose.”

Narcan, which is used to reverse the effects of an opioid overdose, was found at the scene on a mattress, according to TMZ.

It is unclear if the Narcan was used on Panettiere.

The outlet reported that on-again, off-again boyfriend Brian Hickerson and Panettiere flew from Los Angeles to South Carolina, where he is from, on Saturday.

It is unclear if he was the one who placed the 911 call.

The “Scream 4” actress was first linked to Hickerson in 2018, and they had a turbulent relationship.

He was arrested for multiple domestic violence incidents and ultimately sentenced to 45 days in county jail after pleading no contest to two felony counts of injur-

ing a spouse or girlfriend in 2021.

He got four years of probation, was ordered to attend 52 domestic violence classes and received a five-year restraining order to stay away from Panettiere.

Panettiere's shocking death came just three months after she published her deeply candid memoir, “This Is Me: A Reckoning.”

In it, the former child star opened up about her harrowing battles with alcohol and opioid addiction, postpartum depression, domestic abuse and the pressures of growing up in Hollywood.

The actress had been working since she was a baby, appearing in commercials at just 11 months old before landing roles on the soaps “One Life to Live” and “Guiding Light.”

She told People in 2022 that she



Emotional final appearance

Hayden Panettiere appeared emotional and at times struggled with her speech during what would become her final public appearance just months before her heartbreaking death at 36.

“Her speech appeared slow and slurred at times during the book signing,” a source who attended the “Nashville” alum's event at the Harmony Gold Theater on May 26 in Los Angeles exclusively told Page Six.

The insider added that a heartbroken Panettiere became visibly emotional while discussing some of the painful experiences she chronicled in her memoir, “This Is Me: A Reckoning.”

The source also recalled organizers repeatedly reminding attendees not to record the event and later prohibiting photos or videos as fans approached Panettiere during the signing.

A separate source told Page

Six, “Earlier this year, she did seem a little tired at times. But she was a night owl and ... she has a lot on her plate.”

“Hayden also suffered from anxiety at times, and I know she would occasionally take medication for that. And every so often that could impact her speech.”

Representatives for Panettiere and Book Soup did not respond to Page Six's requests for comment.

Sarah Jones

but still probing after ‘apparent OD’ CALL FOR ‘CARDIAC ARREST’

was offered “happy pills” before attending red carpets when she was 15.

“They were to make me peppy during interviews,” she said. “I had no idea that this was not an appropriate thing, or what door that would open for me when it came to my addiction.”

The actress continued drinking heavily and occasionally taking opioids.

Child with boxer

She shared an 11-year-old daughter, Kaya, with onetime-fiance Wladimir Klitschko, a former world heavyweight boxing champion.

He moved with their daughter to his native Ukraine when she was 2 years old.

Panettiere relinquished cus-

tody in 2018 after her struggle with addiction and postpartum depression.

“The idea that anybody would think that I would just give away my child and be OK with it is heartbreaking,” she said in May on an episode of the “On Purpose” podcast.

“It couldn’t be further from the truth. It became this horrible cycle for years of battling depression and anxiety and alcoholism and substance abuse and just me trying to find my way back.”

At Panettiere’s final event at the Harmony Gold Theater on May 26 in Los Angeles to promote her book “This Is Me: A Reckoning,” a source who attended the event told Page Six “her speech appeared slow and slurred at times.”

Panettiere also dealt with the

pain of losing her younger brother, Jansen Panettiere, in February 2023 at 28 of an undiagnosed heart condition.

“He was my only sibling, and it was my job to protect him,” she told People in a 2024 interview. “When I lost him, I felt like I lost half of my soul. When something that massive has happened to you, you really learn to pick your fights and just not let the little things upset you.”

“Because once something so horrific, so deep, so catastrophic happens in your life, there’s not much that can really rock you.”

Panettiere is best known for her roles in “Remember the Titans,” “Heroes,” “Nashville,” and “Scream 4.”

Her final role was in “Sleepwalker,” a psychological thriller released in January.

Hayden eyed a fresh start

Hayden Panettiere was on track for a reset when she appeared on the “Tamron Hall Show” in May.

The actress visited the daytime talk show to promote her new memoir, “This Is Me: A Reckoning,” which tackled her struggles with addiction, how postpartum depression led to her decision to give up custody of her daughter, Kaya, and more.

She appeared on Hall’s show to

expand on her memoir and to make it clear that she turned her life around, according to a source familiar with the interview.

“It seemed that she really felt wronged by so many people, and — with that — she was focused on resetting her life,” the insider told Page Six.

Panettiere’s publicist, Kasey Kitchen, accompanied her to the show, and also appeared by her side during one segment.

“[Hayden] really wanted [Kasey] there for the hour, and their friendship seemed genuine,” the source told Page Six. “It seemed like her publicist was the only solid person in her corner at the time.”

Panettiere felt safe with Kitchen, per another source, who said the duo met after the actress “turned the corner in a better direction” and was someone “Hayden could trust.” *Carlos Greer*



Kat running mate called 'antisemite'

Adrienne

jeered in

Brooklyn

By VAUGHN GOLDEN
and MARIE POHL

Gov. Hochul's running mate, former City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams, was heckled by pro-Israel protesters during a Brooklyn Democratic Party forum last week, The Post can reveal.

House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries and state Attorney General Letitia James were also on hand for the event at the Thomas Jefferson Democratic Club in Mill Basin hosted by scandal-plagued former local party boss Frank Seddio.

"Jews are second-class citizens," pro-Israel activist Stephanie Benshimol shouted at Adams — whom some Democrats fault with not doing more to combat antisemitism when she served as speaker from 2022 through 2025.

The former Queens councilwoman refused to take questions from The Post before she scampered out of the building.

When Jeffries, a longtime Brooklyn congressman, threw his support behind Adams, Benshimol started walking around the room, wanting to be heard on the issue dear to many Jewish New Yorkers.

"I just have a question," she said. "Don't tell me to go home." But the crowd booed her, telling her

she was "out of order," and began forcing her out of the room.

The fracas came as Adams appeared to be trying to mend fences with Brooklyn Democratic bigwigs.

Hochul — who is running for a second, full four-year term in November — picked Adams as her running mate in February, in the first all-female major-party gubernatorial ticket in state history.

But the lieutenant governor pick was met with a temporary revolt from Brooklyn party bosses, with state Assemblywoman Rodneyse Bichotte Hermelyn and other leaders of the King County Democratic Committee initially withdrawing their support of Hochul in light of the announcement.

Migrant woes

Last year, Adams received a puny 6% of the first-round mayoral primary vote in the Assembly district surrounding the Jefferson Democratic Club, where she spoke to a crowd of about 50 attendees on Thursday.

She was introduced by James, a former Brooklyn council member, who said that Adams has proven "that you can be a fighter and builder at the same time."



What are you going to do for all the antisemitism and the safety of the Jews in New York?

— Pro-Israel activist
Stephanie Benshimol



NY Post: William Clapton

'KINGS'-MAKERS: Adrienne Adams addresses the Thomas Jefferson Democratic Club in Mill Basin, Brooklyn, last week amid protests.

But while James spoke, protesters outside were shouting, "Adrienne Adams go home" and "Adrienne Adams is an antisemite."

Robert Pearl, a blogger and member of the "New Yorkers First" organization who was among the protesters, told The Post he didn't approve of what Adams did to "this neighborhood" during the migrant crisis.

"This neighborhood got hit very badly by the migrant crisis. They drained our resources," Pearl said. "It was a very serious thing, and nobody listened to us."

Outside the club, Benshimol told

The Post she was just trying to ask Adams, "What are you going to do for all the antisemitism and the safety of the Jews in New York?"

"This is the largest population of Jews outside of Israel," Benshimol said, "and Adrienne Adams wouldn't answer my question. And they threw me out."

Seddio, who offered kosher hot dogs to the protesters, insisted that there was "nobody more supportive of Israel than this particular Democratic club."

"Every one of our elected officials has been supportive of Israeli issues," he told The Post.

City ups its war on rats

New York City's war on rats is ramping up, with strict new rules governing inspections of suspected rodent-infested properties.

The city Department of Health, in response to a new local law, is drafting the regulations requiring the agency to inspect a property within 14 days of receiving a complaint or request regarding a rat infestation.

Local Law 8 of 2026 also requires the Health Department to record specific information during each pass or fail inspection.

"The proposed rule would clarify how the Department determines whether a building passes or fails an inspection for rats, and specify the abatement measures the person in control of such building must take," the rule states.

The law was written by Brooklyn Councilwoman Susan Zhuang following constituent complaints that rat sightings were not promptly investigated.

"This bill begins with a constituent begging our office for help after she placed countless 311 rat complaints and never saw city agency inspectors come to respond to any call," Zhuang said during a

Dec. 4, 2025, hearing before the legislation was passed.

Carl Campanile



Have a mice flight at LaG

A passenger was left shocked when she saw mice snacking and racing around near a boarding gate at LaGuardia Airport on Sunday.

Traveler Lindsey Powers shared video with Storyful of two rodents running around and underneath chairs at the Queens airport's Terminal B as travelers waited to board flights.

Powers said she saw a total of four mice, but only captured two on video.

"One came up to me and was snacking on something," she told Storyful.

A LaGuardia rep did not respond to a request for comment.

Daniel Cody

Nursing homes fight Haiti deportations

A coalition representing 400 New York nursing homes is urging the Trump administration to shelve its decision to rescind Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for thousands of Haitians who work in the facilities, claiming it will destabilize

the workforce and impact services to frail elderly residents.

Under the TPS program, more than 350,000 people from both Haiti and Syria were allowed to live and work in the US while their home countries faced hu-

manitarian crises. Many Haitians found work in the Empire State at nursing homes, but after the administration's reversal, their work permits are moot.

"New York has the highest share of immigrant direct care workers of any

state, with 40,000 Haitian TPS holders — 7,000 of whom work as nursing assistants and direct care givers," Stephen Hanse, president and CEO of the New York State Health Facilities Association and the New York State Center for As-

sisted Living, said in an Aug. 14 letter to Homeland Security Director Markwayne Mullin.

TPS for Haitians had been repeatedly extended until President Trump recently terminated the designation.

Carl Campanile



MITCH McCONNELL
Health is still questioned.

Ky.'s gov calls out MIA sen.

Democratic Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear again complained Sunday that Sen. Mitch McConnell and his aides are keeping the former Republican leader's health status a secret, claiming in an interview that he's "heard absolutely nothing" about the 84-year-old's progress.

McConnell (R-Ky.) last cast a Senate roll call vote June 11, three days before he was hospitalized after falling at his Capitol Hill home.

"I've heard absolutely nothing back from Mitch McConnell," Beshear told CBS News' "Face the Nation" Sunday. "His boss are the people of Kentucky, and this is why the Republican-controlled Senate feels so broken."

McConnell's office has released several smiling proof-of-life photos, but skeptics have demanded more confirmation of his fitness to complete his Senate term, which will end in January.

Ryan King

Bug behind fatal wreck

A New Jersey driver veered into oncoming traffic on a Pennsylvania road, killing two motorcyclists, after she "freaked out" over a bug, police said.

Bernadette Cobb, 55, was driving east on a two-lane road in Luthersburg, northeast of Pittsburgh, when an insect flew in her open window around 4:45 p.m. on Aug. 12, NJ.com reported.

Both the Harley driver, Anthony Sones, 34, and his passenger, Miranda Wormuth, 30, died at the scene.

Cobb's attorney Brian Manchester, told NJ.com, "We will defend her vigorously." David DeTurris

'ARCH'-VILLAIN H.Q.



By JOE MARINO, STEVEN VAGO and JORGE FITZ-GIBBON

A 19-year-old Australian tourist was stabbed and seriously wounded in an unprovoked attack early Monday at a Manhattan fast-food joint that's been dubbed the "Murder McDonald's."

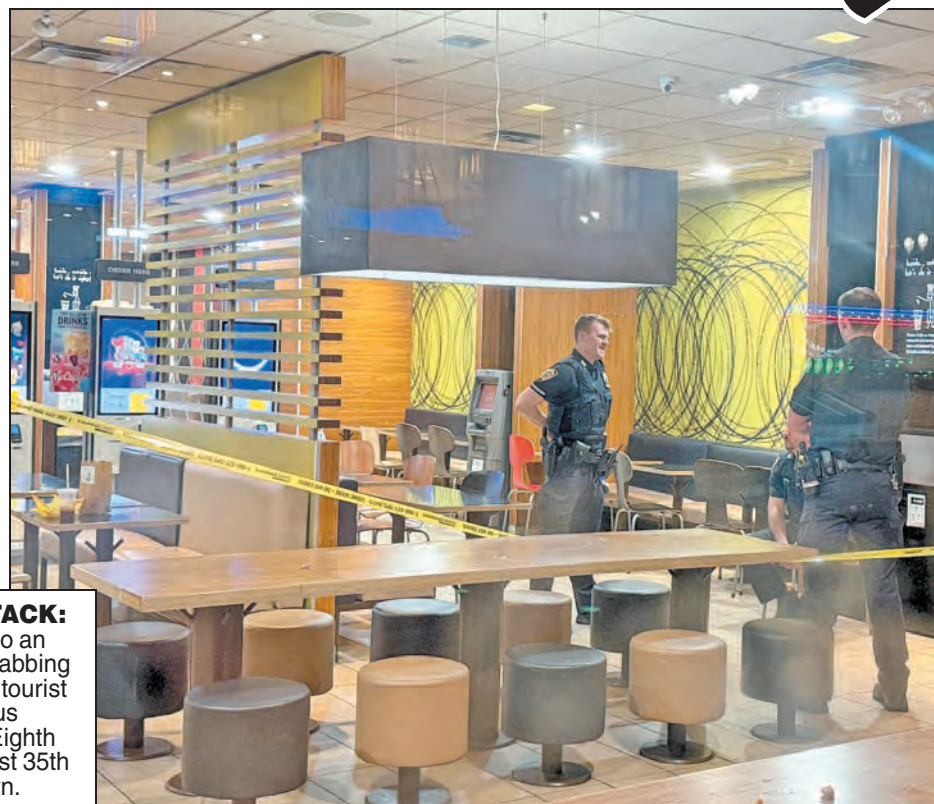
The McDonald's at 490 Eighth Avenue, which is open 24/7, is an infamous hangout for shady characters, attracting a seedy clientele, including drug dealers, thugs and junkies from a nearby methadone clinic.

"It's like a f--king nightmare," said one clinic patron named Toaster, 45, adding that he eats at the restaurant about once a week.

"It's a murder McDonald's. They do whatever they want here. It's like a little slice of hell because you can get whatever you need here," he said. "You gotta watch out while you're eating McDonald's and you're not even freaking from here."

At around 2 a.m. on Monday, a 19-year-old man from Australia was eating at the McDonald's when he was stabbed in the ribs and back by a maniac wielding a knife, according to police and law-

BIG MAC ATTACK:
Police respond to an early Monday stabbing of an Australian tourist inside a notorious McDonald's at Eighth Avenue and West 35th Street in Midtown.



Robert Mecea, Stephen Yang

Stab at 'murder Mc'Donald's'

enforcement sources.

Words were exchanged between the victim and his attacker, but sources said the horrifying incident was largely unprovoked.

'Vampires'

The victim, who was staying at a nearby hotel, according to sources, was rushed to Bellevue Hospital, where he was in stable condition.

Cops arrested Juan Mercedes, 25, and charged him with second-degree assault in the attack. Mercedes, of Florida, was awaiting arraignment later Monday.

The victim may have been unaware of the Penn Station-area restaurant's sordid reputation, which

stretches back at least a decade.

But the notorious eatery remains a known hangout for troublemakers, according to the neighborhood regulars — and a security guard stationed outside Monday.

"It is bad," the guard said. "There's a clinic across the street so the clinic people come in."

But she said the violence usually takes place outside: "It's more so the homeless people fighting the homeless people. It's not really inside here."

She said her co-worker, who was on duty at the time of the stabbing, gave her a blow-by-blow account, including telling her "I almost got stabbed, too."

The attacker "was screaming

and ran to [the victim] and stabbed him twice," she said the fellow security guard told her.

"He was just talking gibberish."

The fellow guard "said he asked why he would do that and he just stared at him. He waited outside for the cops. When the cops came, he dropped the knife."

Nearby, a panhandler and admitted former drug pusher named Tony said anyone with common sense stays away from the eatery after midnight.

"Once it gets dark ... that's when the vampires come out, the bloodsuckers," he said.

"It's money hour," Tony added. "Not a place to be hanging out here that late at night."

Sweet deal eyed for 'perv' NJ sitter

The New Jersey babysitter who allegedly posted twisted online video of a toddler looked defiant in court Monday as it surfaced she could land a sweetheart deal handing her one-tenth of her potential prison sentence.

Accused child-sex-assaulter Victoria Anne Cranmer, 25, appeared in the

Toms River courtroom fettered in her trademark pink handcuffs and petulantly glaring at reporters as prosecutors revealed the possible plea agreement.

The proposed pact would involve the alleged nasty nanny's pleading guilty to second-degree sex assault, Assistant Ocean County Prosecutor Lynn Juan said.

Prosecutors would recommend that Cranmer serve a brief three-year prison sentence if she accepts the pact, Juan said.

The babysitter was charged with second-degree sexual assault, second-degree manufacturing of child-sex-abuse material, third-degree endangering a child and third-degree pos-

session of child-sexual-abuse material — raps that carry a total maximum of 30 years behind bars.

Cranmer allegedly captured herself on video laughing as a girl still in diapers touched Cranmer's private parts, and then posted it to Snapchat.

As part of the proposed deal, Cranmer would also

be required to register as a sex offender, have parole supervision for life and receive a no-contact order with the victim, Juan said.

Cranmer's lawyer, Connor Kane, said he hadn't yet been able to discuss the offer with his client. Cranmer is due back in court Sept 14.

Reuven Fenton and David DeTurris

THE BATTLE FOR IRAN

Abe 'tired' but strong: adm. BLOCKADE

By STEVEN NELSON

WASHINGTON — The top US military commander in the Middle East has admitted that sailors aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln are "tired" after a record-setting deployment, but continue to "fire on all cylinders" after reports emerged last week that multiple service members attempted to jump overboard.

Adm. Brad Cooper, the head of Tampa, Fla.-based US Central Command, visited the aircraft carrier in the north Arabian Sea on Saturday ahead of its imminent relief as one of the most important American military hubs waging the Iran war.

"I was blown away by this strong group of high-achieving Americans standing tall with justified pride in everything they have accomplished," Cooper wrote in a Wall Street Journal op-ed published Monday.

The admiral added: "I also saw the reality of more than 260 days at sea with more than 150 days in a combat zone, while speaking with sailors in spaces most



STALWART: Sailors aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln are "firing on all cylinders," top brass says.

guests don't see."

Cooper did not deny reports of mental fatigue and difficult living conditions afflicting the more than 5,000 sailors and Marines aboard the vessel but wrote that "many elements of those stories are old news."

"Issues related to food, hot water and other concerns raised months ago were addressed by leadership and resolved," the admiral wrote.

"The crew is tired, but they continue to fire on all cylinders. History will record this deployment as one of the most operationally intense and consequential of the modern era."

Don's strong words for Oman

WASHINGTON — President Trump warned Oman Monday that the US will "bomb the s--t" out of them if they interfere in the simmering conflict with Iran in the Strait of Hormuz.

"If Oman gets in the way, we'll bomb the s--t out of them," Trump told Fox News' Trey Yingst in a phone interview as a tentative cease-fire agreement between the US and Iran expired.

Iran said last week that it was in talks with the Arab sultanate about how to reopen the world's busiest oil shipping channel, which has been largely closed since the start of the war Feb. 28.

The two nations came to an "understanding" on Monday as they hammer out the final stages of the pact, Iranian Foreign Ministry rep Esmail Baghaei said in a statement. *Chris Nesi and Steven Nelson*

Jared, Hamas 'cordial'

WASHINGTON — President Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner met for four hours with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, urging him to drop his opposition to the Trump-chaired Board of Peace's 15-point plan that calls for Hamas to disarm in exchange for a full Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

"I mean, [Hamas] said all the right things, but, obviously, it's

very, very hard to trust a terrorist organization that committed these terrible atrocities. But we had a very cordial meeting. And they said all the right things," Kushner told Fox News' Trey Yingst after talks Sunday with Hamas leaders, followed by the Netanyahu meeting.

"And so we're going to give them a chance to perform, but it's going to have to be based on actions and steps, and I hope it will be true."

Steven Nelson and Emily Goodin



Bare naked legs lady is

An Iranian woman was harassed for wearing shorts in public, leading morality police to force her to cover up as the regime cracks down on what women can wear in the Islamic Republic.

Viral video from the streets of Amol, a city in northern Iran, captured a heated inter-

action as one woman shouted and berated another for failing to comply with the country's mandatory hijab law.

"What you're doing is disgraceful," the traditionalist yelled at the young woman wearing shorts as she waited for the bus. "Even in Turkey, you couldn't go out dressed like this.

Stand up, please. Get up and leave."

The frustrated woman in shorts yelled back for the instigator to leave her alone, but the hijab law supporter continued following and berating her.

"You've got no right to come out looking like this," the woman yells. "How dare you

THE BATTLE FOR IRAN

WILL F'OIL' IRAN

By RONNY REYES

Export plunge \$hock: expert

Iran's oil exports have dropped to nearly zero under the renewed US naval blockade, according to analysis from a former senior US Treasury official, who predicts that the economic impacts could hit the country's elite and destabilize the regime within two to three months.

Iran's ability to ship oil out of the Strait of Hormuz to offset its current economic woes has hit a wall under the new blockade, with little to no activity seen at its Kharg Island hub, according to recent satellite images.

As Iran and the US attempt to use economic pressures to see who will blink first, Miad Maleki, who served in the Treasury under President Trump and former President Joe Biden, said Tehran's regime will finally run out of room to maneuver this fall.

"The blockade has exposed Iran's biggest economic vulnerability," said Maleki, who now works at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies think tank.

"Iran's oil clock is running down, and the real fiscal shock is going to hit in the fall when all their payments come due," he added.

Iran notably pays its troops, government employees, security forces and industrial workers in cycles, with about 60% of the money coming from its oil exports, Maleki said.

If its exports continue to be

hamstrung in the next cycle, the regime will have few options to shield its soldiers and elites from the economic shock.

While the regime has proven that it can endure economic pains suffered by everyday citizens, its attitude will likely change once members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and the wealthy elite start complaining, Maleki said.

Trump, who has previously boasted that Iran has no money to pay its troops, signaled that he would maintain full economic pressures on Iran.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has also threatened more penalties to come for the Islamic Republic.

Bessent warned that the so-called Operation Economic Fury would roll out additional measures

after already taking increasingly aggressive actions to sanction money-changers, cryptocurrency and other sources of revenue for Iran.

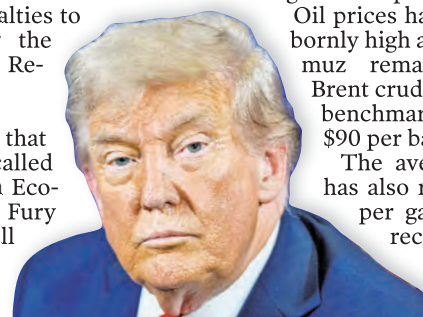
'Economic isolation'

The goal is to hit Iran with "economic isolation like the world has never seen before," he told Newsmax's Rob Schmitt last week.

Iran, meanwhile, believes it can outlast the US in a game of economic chicken as the war has also taken its toll on America's economy and created some backlash against the president.

Oil prices have remained stubbornly high as the Strait of Hormuz remains closed, with Brent crude, the international benchmark, hitting about \$90 per barrel on Monday.

The average price of gas has also remained above \$4 per gallon in the US in recent weeks, according to AAA.



rreyes@nypost.com

Trump: No extending MOU

President Trump confirmed the US isn't expanding the window for peace talks with Tehran on Monday as the US-Iran memorandum of understanding's 60-day deadline for negotiations expired.

"Well, they want to make a deal, but they're not going to make the kind of a deal that I feel is necessary," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office on Monday.

The president has demanded a cease-fire that will end Iran's nuclear program but Tehran wants to pursue a "nuclear energy" program.

The MOU failed to meet major objectives, like reopening the Strait of Hormuz, ending Tehran's nuclear program and reaching a

final peace deal. Its provisions allow for an extension of talks, but those have been dead for weeks — and now both sides agree any extension is pointless.

Iran's foreign ministry also ruled out additional talks.

"We did not start any negotiations at all, and the US violated the understanding from the very beginning; therefore, the 60-day issue is not relevant," spokesperson Esmail Baqaei said.

When Trump signed the MOU with his big Sharpie pen in the halls of Versailles with French President Emmanuel Macron by his side, his administration called it proof positive the president could stop the "endless" cycle of

war in the Middle East.

In the days after it was signed on June 17, told critics to let the 60 days play out. Now, two months later, things appear to be at a standstill.

While there have been no publicly reported US military strikes on Iran since late July, the Trump administration is switching to a new weapon: an economic sword to gut the already devastated Iranian economy.

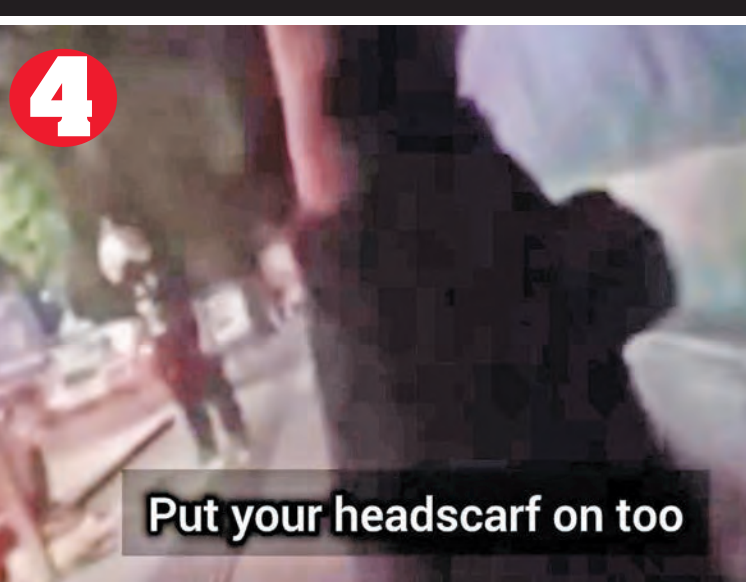
"We are going to apply measures like have never been seen in the history of economic isolation of a country," Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said in a Thursday interview with Newsmax's Rob Schmitt.

Emily Goodin

X / @AlirezaMasih



What you're doing is disgraceful!



Put your headscarf on too

forced to cover

come out dressed like this! Don't let it happen again!"

Morality police could then be seen coming in and giving the young woman a pair of pants to use to cover up her legs.

"Put your headscarf on, too," one of the officers orders.

It's unclear exactly when the video of the confrontation was

taken, but it comes as Iran's regime launched a new crackdown over the hijab law.

Authorities have shut down at least 42 cafes, women's gyms, restaurants and stores over the last three weeks due to violations of the strict dress code, Iran International reported.

Ronny Reyes

CHIPPING IN \$105B



THE DEAL: Jensen Huang's (right) Nvidia will provide \$105 billion for Ohio data center for Sam Altman's OpenAI.

Getty Images; Reuters

Nvidia's OpenAI data-center invest

By THOMAS BARRABI

Chip-making giant Nvidia will provide up to \$105 billion in financing toward a massive AI data center in Ohio that will be leased by Sam Altman's OpenAI and is expected to be one of the largest of its kind in the world, the companies announced Monday.

OpenAI has inked a 20-year deal for the site, which will ultimately provide about eight gigawatts of computing capacity that will help support products like ChatGPT, the companies said. In energy terms, a single gigawatt can power about 750,000 homes.

"This is going to be a huge site, with enough computing power to help millions of people use AI to do things we can only start to im-

agine today, from finding new medicines to starting businesses and solving hard problems," Altman said in a statement.

OpenAI said the data-center project is "expected to create 35,000 construction jobs during its six-year buildout through 2032 and 2,500 long-term operating jobs."

Nvidia will serve as the exclusive computer-chip provider for the facility, to be located in Ohio's Pike County. The first 800 megawatts of "compute" is expected to be available for use by 2028.

As part of the arrangement, Nvidia is also pouring \$1.5 billion into SB Energy, a data-center firm that's a subsidiary of Masayoshi Son's SoftBank.

"We are securing long-lived in-

frastructure for Nvidia compute so OpenAI can deploy the most productive AI factories that can be upgraded repeatedly with each new generation delivering more intelligence and better economics," Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang said in a press release.

Controversial

The company has come under scrutiny for providing funding for AI labs even as those companies buy its expensive AI computer chips and other data center-related infrastructure.

Huang said the arrangement was not a form of "circular financing" and noted that OpenAI would pay the lease. Nvidia's financing will backstop "defined portions of

lease and power payments" rather than the full cost of the project, he added.

In all, OpenAI's commitments to buy Nvidia hardware and compute capacity will reach \$600 billion by 2030, according to Huang.

The Ohio project will be closely watched on Wall Street, where investors have grown increasingly concerned about the huge sums being paid by AI firms as they race to develop advanced AI.

Other critics have focused on the huge energy demands associated with AI models and raised concerns that soaring costs will be passed on to ordinary Americans. Recent months have seen a series of headline-grabbing anti-data center protests.

tbarrabi@nypost.com

6-figure cost of NY livin'

The privilege of calling the Big Apple and its surrounding neighborhoods "home" doesn't come cheap, reveals an August report, crowning New York and New Jersey in the top five most expensive states for living comfortably.

Trailing closely behind Hawaii, Massachusetts and California, the Empire State secured the fourth-place position on the roster, requiring \$124,342 and \$291,533 as the minimum amounts singletons and families of four must earn in order to survive, respectively.

New Jersey took the fifth-place slot, commanding a yearly \$113,776 from its singles, and a whopping \$295,110 from couples with at least two kids, the study showed.

"As housing, grocery, transportation and other essential costs pressure household budgets, earning a six-figure salary no longer guarantees financial comfort in much of the US," researchers for SmartAsset, a financial technology company, warn in the trending findings.

The high demand on residents in and around Gotham doesn't come as an eye-popping shock amid the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. It's all contributing evidence to the city's recent rank as the "worst place" to be single. *Asia Grace*

Cops snag 'killer' driver

A Louisiana man allegedly shot and killed his wife, propped her body up in the passenger seat and drove through several states before he was nabbed during a traffic stop.

Tyrone Brazille, 50, was arrested Thursday night after police stopped him in downtown Memphis and found his 50-year-old wife, Lanessa Bradford, dead in the passenger seat from a gunshot wound, WREG reported.

The couple had been at Independence Community Park in Baton Rouge — about 80 miles northwest of New Orleans — when Brazille allegedly shot his wife, investigators said. *Richard Pollina*

Expect AI IPOs to be boon to charities

Initial public offerings for OpenAI and Anthropic stand to unlock an estimated \$430 billion in charity pledges, rivaling the gifts of American tycoons during the Gilded Age.

With the companies' looming IPOs estimated to generate more than \$1 trillion each, both AI giants

have pledged to give billions of dollars away in what would be an unprecedented philanthropic wave that could benefit charities around the world, The Economist reported.

"This could be a moment where hundreds of millions of lives can be improved, and there may not be many

moments like that in history," said Nick Allardice of the charity GiveDirectly.

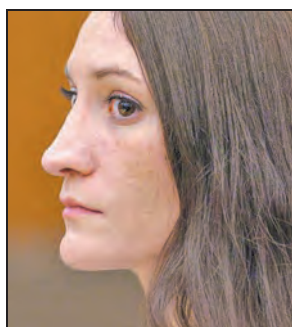
Anthropic alone is expected to end up donating around \$110 billion solely on the promise made by its seven co-founders, who vowed to give away 80% of their wealth to good causes, according to Forbes.

Another \$60 billion would come from Anthropic employees' donor-advised funds, as the company also matches its workers' charitable contribution to the pots.

OpenAI, meanwhile, has its nonprofit OpenAI Foundation, which uses the company's vast resour-

ces to fund large-scale philanthropic grants.

With the foundation holding 26% of OpenAI's stock, the organization may soon have an estimated \$260 billion to give away. The total funds for charity from OpenAI and Anthropic stand at about 1.3% of America's total GDP. *Ronny Reyes*



LINDSAY CLANCY
At her murder trial Monday.

Tears for other kid slayings

Lindsay Clancy once cried when she learned about the horror case of infamous kid-killing mom Andrea Yates, according to chilling court testimony Monday.

Clancy — on trial in Massachusetts for fatally strangling her three children with exercise cords — wept over the 2001 case in which Yates drowned her five children, ages 4 months to 7 years old, in their Houston home, a former co-worker said.

Margaret Hamp mentioned the Yates case when a suicidal pregnant woman came into the hospital where they worked as labor and deliver nurses.

Clancy “cried and said, ‘How could a mother hurt her children?’” said Hamp.

Clancy’s lawyers say the 36-year-old mom was in the throes of a postpartum psychosis when she killed her young children in 2023.

Yates also had claimed postpartum psychosis and was eventually found not guilty by reason of insanity.

Priscilla DeGregory

Don assault ruling stands

The Supreme Court rebuffed President Trump’s request Monday to reconsider his appeal of a \$5 million award to E. Jean Carroll in her sexual-assault and defamation civil lawsuit.

The justices rarely grant such rehearings, and Trump paid the judgment amount after they declined in June.

“The jury’s unanimous verdict that Donald Trump sexually assaulted and then defamed E. Jean Carroll is now final,” Carroll’s attorney Roberta Kaplan said.

Emily Goodin

Shoplifting isn’t out of need – it’s for cash

NICOLE GELINAS



OUTSIDE Manhattan Criminal Court last week, Brooklyn Assemblywoman Emily Gallagher called the scourge of shoplifting that’s set in over the past decade the result of “crimes of poverty, people who are stealing things like toothpaste . . . And that means if you’re stealing those things, you need them.”

It’s hard to know which would be worse: that Gallagher isn’t aware that shoplifting is a gang-led, bulk-fencing scheme that costs jobs and that can escalate to deadly violence — or that she doesn’t care.

The criminals responsible for a disproportionate percentage of New York City retail theft aren’t driven by hunger (or by a desire for clean teeth).

They are repeat actors — people who steal and sell stolen goods for a living, or people who steal to support drug habits.

As The New York Times reported in 2023, just 327 people in 2022 were responsible for almost 1 in 3 city shoplifting arrests, with some “engage[d] in shoplifting as a trade,” and others “driven by addiction or mental illness.”

Liberals don’t get it

Criminal rings help small-scale thieves resell their goods — at pawn shops, at bodegas and online.

In 2023, The New Yorker profiled a beneficiary of New York’s supportive-housing network, who resold stolen goods online to make a little extra cash.

That’s common: Open-air markets around the city regularly feature stolen toiletries for sale.

Even as the most violent crimes in New York City have abated in the past few years after their post-2020 surge, theft remains much higher than a decade ago.

This year’s tally of reported petit larcenies — 60,003 through early August — is 5% below last year’s, yes.

But it remains close to a quarter higher than the norm between the early 2000s and 2017 — that is, before New York state changed its criminal-justice laws, particularly around evidence production and cash bail, to make it harder to incapacitate repeat thieves.



BOOSTER: Shoplifters like this two-armed bandit are often part of a criminal ring to resell the stolen goods, which is lost on liberals such as Brooklyn Assemblywoman Emily Gallagher (below).

Gallagher, a democratic socialist who supports such lenience, doesn’t acknowledge what regular New Yorkers know: Mass shoplifting also harms regular people, making it harder to go to the store and pay for stuff.

As that well-known right-wing pundit Al Sharpton put it in 2022 when he discussed the “out-of-control” crime rise, “They’re locking up my toothpaste.”

The fact that you can’t easily buy mouthwash from the store anymore means fewer people work at the drugstores — as they’re losing business to Amazon.

As of June, 37,400 New Yorkers worked at “health and personal care” retailers — that is, drugstores — a full

10,500 people below the 2017 level.

That’s a loss of 22% of such jobs, when the nation as a whole has shed only 5% of jobs in that category.

And the supposedly “nonviolent” crime of shoplifting can escalate.

In 2023, a CVS security guard, Scotty Enoe, tried to stop a thief at a Times Square store, only to be attacked.

Enoe stabbed the criminal, Charles Brito, in self-defense — and though DA Alvin Bragg tried to lock him up for manslaughter, a Manhattan jury acquitted him.

The state Legislature in which Gallagher serves could have prevented this death: Brito was a serial shoplifter with more than a dozen prior arrests.

Just last fall, a Morton Williams guard in

Hell’s Kitchen tried to stop a beer thief — and lost his life grappling with the perp.

Insult to poor people

The only reason that shoplifting has fallen slightly in the past couple of years is a modest rollback of the criminal-justice lenience that Gallagher supports. The fact that judges can now set bail for repeat shoplifting means the NYPD rearrests just 13% of suspects with the first 30 days of their release, down from 20%. The Post reported in April. Worst of all, though, Gallagher’s fact-free insistence that stealing toothpaste is a crime of poverty is an insult to poor people.

Most poor people don’t steal.

Thieves do — and they steal more when they think they can get away with it, thanks to progressivism’s misplaced pieties.

Nicole Gelinas is a contributing editor to the Manhattan Institute’s City Journal.



Steven Hirsch

Four tests of fall risk

By RACHEL SACKS

Your parents' health may hang in the balance.

Falls are the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries for adults over 65, with about 14 million falling each year.

For those caring for aging parents and worried about their risk of falling, knowing what signs to look for can make all the difference — and it only takes about 10 seconds.

While falling risk increases as we age, it rarely “comes out of nowhere,” according to geriatric specialist Dr. Anita Chandra.

Many people show subtle changes beforehand.

How they perform four key actions “can be early signs of declining strength or balance.”

Enter the Timed Up and Go test, a four-step screening tool where both time and movement are of importance.

Watch more

“Honestly, I’m watching much more than the stopwatch,” Chandra said in a social media post. “I’m watching how they move. Movement often tells me more than imaging ever could.”

The four movements Chandra evaluates:

1. Standing up without using their arms

Does your parent need the assistance of their arms to stand up out of the chair?

The need to push off with their hands can be an early sign of lower-body weakness or age-related muscle loss, a condition known as sarcopenia.

As muscles weaken over time, everyday tasks like climbing stairs or getting out of a chair can become more difficult, as well as increase the risk of falling.

2. How they walk

Chandra also recommends paying close attention to how your parents walk: Are they walking slower or taking short steps? Are they swinging their arms? Do they seem unsteady?

We may walk slower and become more tired from walking as we age due to ankle mobility, with an Australian study finding that older adults stiffened the ankle to prevent falls.

3. How they turn around

There’s more to this part of the TUG test than meets the eye.

“Turning around requires balance, coordination and strength,” Chandra said. “A slow or unstable turn often tells me to dig deeper.”

And the sooner you can keep an eye out, the better, as balance begins to decline as early as age 50.

4. Sit down with control

Just as being able to get up out of a chair is a sign of aging, so is being able to sit back down, namely with control.

rsacks@nypost.com

‘Mam’darin vid deny

Hizzoner is giving lip to critics who claim he used AI for city videos showing him speaking high-level Mandarin and Bengali.

Mayor Mamdani’s team flatly denied that artificial intelligence was used in the pair of clips he released last week to promote the city’s giveaway of 2,000 free Broadway show tickets for high-school students.

“And just to be clear this is NOT AI,” Mamdani’s press secretary and chief spokesperson Joe Calvella wrote Sunday on X in response to the video in which the mayor addresses the camera

comfortably speaking Mandarin for 41 seconds while seated at his desk.

As a candidate, Mamdani was known for speaking to constituents in their native languages, including Arabic, Hindi and Urdu.

His apparent proficiency with Mandarin was not unveiled until Saturday’s video touting the Theater Development Fund giveaway.

A Mamdani spokesperson told The New York Times the mayor studied Mandarin at the Bronx HS of Science, but said he hadn’t studied or spoken it since.

Craig McCarthy, Chris Nesi

How brutal pimps rule

By MEGAN PALIN

One of New York’s most notorious pimps was finally caged at the end of July, sentenced to 50 years on charges of human trafficking and ordering the murder of a rival.

The trial of Omari “Prince” Scott, 45, opened a window into the seedy world of the “Penn Track” in East New York, Brooklyn, where he pimped out multiple women.

Despite Scott’s conviction, sex workers tell The Post business around Pennsylvania Avenue — also known as “the Blade” — continues as brazenly as usual, with tens of women on the streets selling sex for as little as \$85 a time and conditions worse than ever.

Meanwhile, the NYPD concentrates on “outreach” to sex workers over busting johns.

Two women currently working told The Post on condition of anonymity the practices laid bare in Scott’s prosecution — coercion, violence and ruthless competition — remain part of their lives.

“The pimp will say, ‘We building something.’ But it’s you building and him collecting. You think you chose him. Then you realize you gotta ask to leave, ask to eat, ask to keep some of your own money.”

Making quota

Scott demanded women working for him make \$1,000 a night, it emerged at trial, which current workers said was typical.

“You gotta have a quota. You don’t make quota, you can’t come inside. You stay out there till you do, even if it’s 4 a.m. and raining,” one of the women who spoke to The Post said.

“[The pimps] sit parked up the block watching. Not to protect you — to make sure you don’t stop, don’t talk too long, don’t pocket anything.”

Even protection, she said, could prove conditional: “If a date gets rough, you call him and maybe he comes, maybe he don’t. If it’s about money though? He comes real quick.”

Late at night, the four-block stretch of the Penn Track takes on an unusual rhythm for what would otherwise be a deserted industrial area in a quiet pocket of the city.

Photos taken by The Post last week show women clad in little more than high heels, neon thongs or skimpy lingerie and sometimes only see-through tops as they worked the streets.

A steady circuit of slowly moving cars heavily congests the strip, often prompting Google Maps to highlight it red — indicating a traffic jam.

At Scott’s trial, Amanda Vizcarrondo-Ortiz, 35, testified about her experience of being pimped.

She had found the Track online and traveled from Massachusetts to work there alone in late 2022. She unwittingly broke the first rule of the area



NIGHTMARE: Sex workers tell The Post of the near-slave conditions on the notorious Penn Track in East New York, Brooklyn, even after the conviction of Omari “Prince” Scott (below) on trafficking and ordering a hit on a fellow pimp.

simply by walking on the sidewalk, thus marking her as a “renegade” — a woman without a pimp — and leading to her promptly being maced, she told a Brooklyn federal jury, according to a trial transcript obtained by The Post.

“She maced me because her pimp told her to, because I was walking on the sidewalk and not in the middle of the street,” she testified.

Scott later found Vizcarrondo-Ortiz and made his pitch as to why she should work for him. She agreed — and from then on, she said, every dollar she made went into his pocket.

“I just make the money and he collects it all,” Vizcarrondo-Ortiz explained. “You can’t be with a pimp . . . and say, ‘Oh, I’m to keep this.’”

In return, she said, a pimp was “supposed to make sure that we’re OK,” using some of the women’s earnings to pay for hotel rooms, meals, clothes and hair products.

One of the women currently working the same strip described a strikingly similar arrangement to The Post.

“He takes it right out your hand.

You don’t even put it in your pocket first. If you do, that’s a problem,” she said.

“He says it’s for ‘us’ — but somehow he always fresh and you still wearing the same thing.”

‘Naked and heels’

The women work the street while pimps occupy the sidewalk, Vizcarrondo-Ortiz testified.

“In New York . . . they stand in a group of 30 or 40 of them,” she said of the pimps. “That is my protection. As far as being on the Track, I was supposed to be with no clothes and heels — naked and heels,” Vizcarrondo-Ortiz testified.

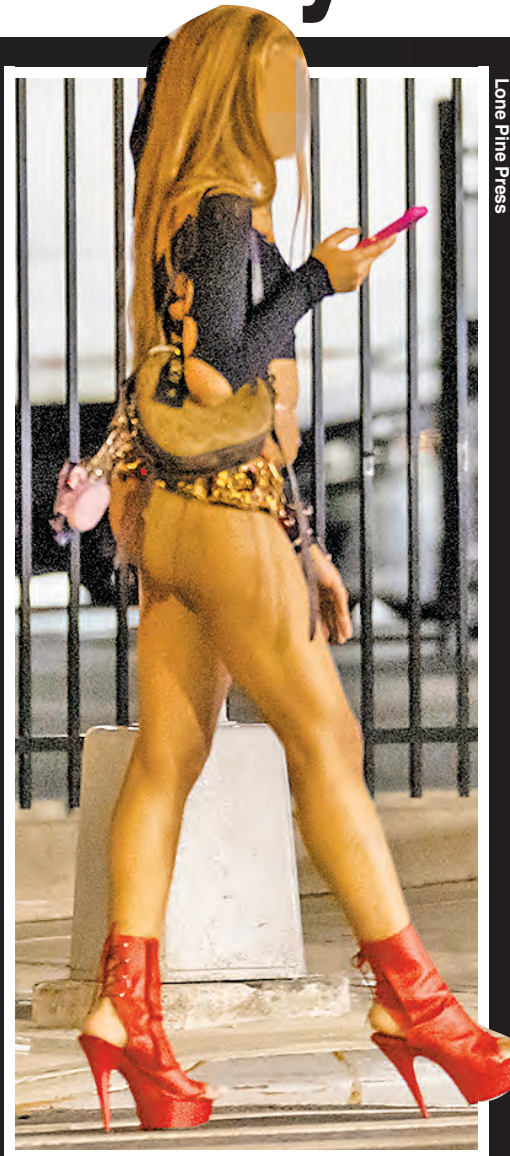
Vizcarrondo-Ortiz testified women trafficked by Scott sometimes appeared with black eyes and Scott also punched her, too.

A summary of the trial evidence against Scott by US District Judge Kiyo Matsumoto included the case of another of Scott’s prostitutes, referred to only as “Henny.”

Scott tracked Henny through the Life360 app and dictated when she

over sex workers on Bklyn's 'Blade'

LIFE ON THE MEAN STREET



NYPD Commissioner Jessica Tisch said following his July 29 sentencing.

Simmons pleaded guilty in a separate case and is awaiting sentencing.

Mam's flip flop

Mayor Mamdani said in 2022 he was in favor of decriminalizing sex work.

In a statement to The Post for this story, his office said: "As the mayor has made clear, he does not support the legalization of sex work, and there has been no change in city policy on sex work since he has taken office."

"The Office of Community Safety leadership met with the Brooklyn district attorney's staff last week about this location to discuss approaches that will deliver durable solutions."

Although three pimps have been taken off the street, others were quick to assume their places. When The Post visited, several men sitting in parked cars and standing on nearby corners appeared to be keeping tabs on the women and the passing vehicles.

Other men repeatedly rode through the area on scooters and bikes, surveying the activity. Some would speak with women before riding off, only to return a short time later and repeat the routine.

Another woman described the nightly balancing act: "You gotta keep your eyes on everything. The date, the other girls, the cops, the guys just sitting there watching. You can't relax for one second," she said.

The NYPD stations officers at the Track in an effort to identify trafficking or underage victims and connect them with services which can help.

An NYPD spokesperson told The Post its Human Trafficking Squad has made contact with between 170 and 200 women each year since 2023. It has also made four "outreach operations" along the Penn Track this year, identifying and engaging potential minor and adult victims of sex trafficking and offering services.

However, when NYPD patrol cars passed through on the night of The Post's visit, the pimps and women did not appear visibly bothered and instead shifted to another stretch of the street.

"One week they leave us alone, next week it's every night — lights on us, run our names, move along. Then they gone again and it's back to business," one worker said.

"This ain't my whole life," she added. "This what I do to get through this part of my life."

could leave the street, get out of the cold, change her shoes and spend money.

When Henny told Scott in a text exchange the following Sunday would be her last day working for him, his response was chilling.

"Oh, that's the day of your funeral," he wrote. "You not leaving and that aint no lie."

Despite bringing in thousands of dollars, Henny depended on Scott to provide money for her child's diapers and clothes and rides back to the shelter where she lived, according to trial evidence.

It was a brutal cycle that prosecutors said Scott repeatedly used: promise women protection, take their earnings, make them dependent on him for necessities and then use violence and threats to keep them working.

"Leaving sounds easy until you think about it. You got no

money — he got it all. You got no phone — it's in his name. Where you gonna go?" one of the Penn Track workers told The Post.

She added pimps with multiple women use competition to keep them in line.

"He got three, four of us. He'll put us against each other. 'She made her money, why you can't?' Keeps us competing instead of looking at him."

'I'm about to kill'

One of Scott's trafficking victims, known as Star, testified he beat her in front of Henny, with photographs and video corroborating the abuse.

Henny twice tried to get away. The second time, she attempted to "choose" another pimp: Cleveland Clay.

When Scott found out, he went to find Henny, grabbed her by the hair, dragged her through the street and threw her into his car, according to prosecutors.

"I'm about to violate that b---h,"

Scott said in a recorded call played in court. "I'm about to do her something crazy . . . I'm not respecting this s---t. I'm about to kill this b---h."

Scott recruited fellow trafficker Michael "Victory" Simmons, gave him a wiped-down gun and sent him after Clay, according to the trial evidence.

Simmons changed into black clothing and tracked Clay to a White Castle, where he shot Clay five times at close range in the parking lot on May 1, 2023. Clay died hours later.

Simmons testified the killing happened because Henny had "decided to choose" Clay.

Jurors convicted Scott in June 2025 of that offense and of trafficking Henny. He had already pleaded guilty to trafficking Star and promoting prostitution.

"Omari Scott was a predator of the worst kind — using violence and financial control to force victims into this work and even orchestrating the murder of a rival for encroaching on his business,"



Fox seeks tail-ent for new film

Page Six®

Ian Mohr

imohr@nypost.com

Oli Coleman
ocoleman@nypost.com
Mara Siegler
msiegler@nypost.com
Carlos Greer
cgreer@nypost.com

Kush pushes west

JARED Kushner and first daughter **Ivanka Trump** have been house hunting in Malibu, Page Six can reveal. We've learned "Javanka" toured several high-end listings on the market in Malibu, in the same week Kushner's younger bro, Thrive Capital founder **Joshua Kushner**, announced he was buying the LA Lakers with former Disney CEO **Bob Iger** for \$12.5 billion. It's unclear what role, if any, the older Kushner might play in the Lakers' new ownership group. But the Kushner brothers' business interests have overlapped in the past. A rep for Jared and Ivanka did not comment.



Paris' shock & awe

PARIS Jackson revealed she underwent electroconvulsive therapy while battling depression but insisted it wasn't "barbaric." The 28-year-old (above) explained yesterday on **Jay Shetty's** podcast she "did nine sessions in three weeks" of "getting electrocuted" after being "very close" to attempting suicide. Paris said her doctor told her, "It's not as barbaric as it used to be. They use general anesthetic." Early sessions were "painful," with side effects of soreness and amnesia, but she saw results. Paris' album, "Happiest Day of My Life," is out Friday.

THE fox is out of the bag. Downtown It girl **Julia Fox** is directing her first feature film, we hear.

The fashion darling, self-proclaimed muse and erstwhile dominatrix shot to fame as an actress in "Uncut Gems," and she's also directed a short.

But now, she's set to make her full-length debut behind the camera with "Sixth Avenue Saints," which she also wrote.

The film is set in 1993, against the gritty, pregentrified streets of Brooklyn and downtown Manhattan, and tells the story of Luan, a sensitive 12-year-old boy growing up in a fractured household in Coney Island.

Frankie, a fearless homeless street kid sur-

living downtown on his own, introduces Luan to another side of New York — the piers, queer street life, hustlers, sex workers, junkies and other outsiders living on the margins of the city, according to the production.

The flick is already casting for extras, posting ads for locals to bring authentic "Brooklyn/NYC vibes" to the film.

She's looking for adults ages 30 to 79 and paying \$20 an hour, with a \$100 minimum per day guaranteed, according to industry site Backstage.

Professional acting experience isn't required, according to 25 Casting agent **Katya Chernetsova**.

Final 'Summer' flings

HAMPTONS ladies were "flinging themselves" at the cast of Bravo's "Summer House" while the show filmed at Southampton burlesque spot Maison Close. The show was filming in the restaurant's backyard area, with precious little reality TV flair. "The cast looked super bored," says a source. "There was a magician doing tricks for them, but they didn't look like they were having much fun." Cameras rolled as they headed inside, where dancers had been onstage. Stars **Kyle Cooke** and **KJ Dillard** then got on top of a large platform to dance. "Women were jumping up with them, taking their shoes off, trying to get close enough to dance and flirt with them. It was kind of sad to see how many women were willing to fling themselves at these guys," says the spy.

Write fielders win

THE Writers took the win in the 78th annual Artists & Writers Charity Softball Game in East Hampton this weekend, edging out the Artists by two runs, 8-6. Managed by New Yorker writer **Ken Auletta** and sports commentator **Mike Lupica**, the Writers included **Carl Bernstein**, **Katie Couric** and winning pitcher **Paul Winum**, who sources say overcame the dazzling distraction of model **Christie Brinkley** of the Artists team.

Fox, 36, became a breakout star with her 2019 film debut in **Josh and Benny Safdie's** "Uncut Gems," opposite **Adam Sandler**.

She has since built a career spanning acting, modeling, writing and fashion, becoming one of pop culture's most recognizable downtown personalities.

In 2021, she wrote and directed a short film, "Fantasy Girls," about sex workers in Nevada.

Fox has also been back on the big screen as an actress. Next month, she's appearing in crime thriller "The Deputy," alongside **Jack Nicholson's** grandson, **Duke**, **Tiffany Haddish**, **William H. Macy** and others.

Fox has not responded to Page Six.



B'way loves 'Hate'

LENA Dunham and **Carly Rae Jepsen** (above) are bringing "10 Things I Hate About You" to Broadway. The new musical adaptation of the beloved 1999 teen comedy will begin previews Aug. 17, 2027 — exactly 28 years after the original film's release. Dunham is co-writing the book with playwright **Jessica Huang**, while Jepsen is teaming with Grammy-winning songwriter **Ethan Gruska** on the music and lyrics. **Christopher Wheeldon** will direct and choreograph, with Tony Award winner **Tom Kitt** serving as music supervisor, arranger and orchestrator. **Mike Bosner** is producing. The musical will revisit the romance, rebellion and high-school drama of the original, which starred **Julia Stiles**, **Heath Ledger** and **Joseph Gordon-Levitt**.

Perez fam thanks caring fans

PEREZ Hilton "remains hospitalized" nearly two weeks after his suicide attempt. "To everyone who has reached out, checked in, and kept Perez and our family in your thoughts, THANK YOU!" his family members wrote on the celebrity blogger's website yesterday. The statement confirmed that the 48-year-old is still "receiving the medical care he needs." The entertainment columnist's loved ones added, "His treatment is continuing in an inpatient setting under the care of a dedicated team of medical and mental health professionals." Hilton's sister, **Barbara Lavandeira**, similarly told Page Six in an exclusive interview last week that her sibling is receiving "medical treatment for his injuries," which she did not specify. "I don't want to go into the specific details of his injuries or treatment," she explained. "Those are private medical matters." However, Lavandeira noted, "He did sustain cuts to his face and other areas, but it's still far too early to know the extent of any lasting damage or scarring. What I can say is that he has a long road ahead of him, both physically and mentally." She added, "I don't want to offer a timeline or make promises about when he might come home." Hilton, born Mario Armando Lavandeira Jr., was hospitalized on Aug. 4 after livestreaming self-harm via TikTok from his Florida home.

email us:
tips
@Page
Six
.com



With a zen attitude, Isla Fisher pampers the city that never sleeps as she promotes her comedy, "Spa Weekend," on "Today."

Christopher Peterson / SplashNews.com

Spice up your morning routine.

PAGE SIX HOST
DANNY MURPHY

PAGE SIX HOST
EVAN REAL



Page Six
RADIO

A daily morning show serving up the hottest celebrity headlines, exclusives, and behind-the-scenes buzz.

SiriusXM

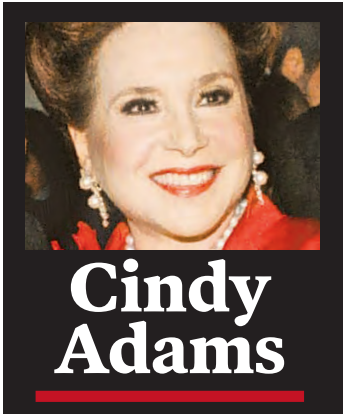
WEEKDAYS, 8-10AM ET
ONLY ON STARS ON SIRIUSXM CH. 109

Listen **FREE** for 3 months

SiriusXM service required. See Offer Details.



He's always in beast mode



Cindy Adams

FORREST Galante travels the planet to discover animals. Me, on the board of the ASPCA for years, I have a dog. I love animals. So is he brave or just nuts? "Last month a great white shark charged me. My heart jumped into my throat. I screamed, hid behind a rock, then exited the water," Galante tells me. "Look, I grew up in Zimbabwe. My family ran safari businesses. I worked with animals when I was 6 and never did anything else. I couldn't name three famous artists, but I know how to track a mountain lion." OK, so once as a houseguest

out west, I got up at 5 a.m. All glass windows. Standing on the other side — this giant, huge black bear staring at me. I was terrified. He was working the handle to get inside. Galante tells me: "Bears. If it's black, fight back. If brown, lie down, if white, say goodnight. Fight a black bear immediately and likely they let you go." "My terror is parasites. I travel all over, drink suspicious water, eat whoknowswhat, get bitten by insects and parasites," he says. "Been knocked down by parasitic infections. Things you can't see can kill you the most easily." I told him that my friend's tiny dog was killed by a coyote. "Do not walk at night with a small dog. Keep it on a leash. A coyote will not attack an adult human but they like skunks and raccoons, which are same as your small dog or cat. Do not let yours run into the bushes," he says. "It's situational. If I come over a rise and am on a hippo's game trail between him and water, that's a bad situation. If a hippo's lazily wallowing in a wet pool, OK. "I've discovered species believed extinct. Nobody in history



Wildlife expert **Forrest Galante** tells a few animal tales.

ever found eight lost species before. But I have. Zanzibar leopard, Fernandina Island tortoise, four different shark species, a blind snake, some new frog and gecko species, a new snail in a cave in Vietnam. And blind cave fish. They haven't eyes, so easy to know that they're blind. "In New York, I'll be with a specialist in breeding rare geckos — believe it or not — under the streets of New York City. That'll soon be featured on YouTube. "I've been scared. My canoe flipped over by a hippo, a lion

asleep on top of me after chasing it on foot. I once rubbed sea snake venom in my eyes after milking sea snakes, which means I thought I'd killed myself." So strangest thing you've ever eaten to survive? "Rats. In Myanmar we ate rat a lot, which I wasn't a huge fan of. They're greasy." **Steep cost of time** CELEB trinkets are unloading. Spencer Tracy climbed around with a 1953 Rolex Explorer in the

movie "The Mountain" so he got to the studio on time. Now for sale in a store called Wind Vintage. The adventure film co-starred **Robert Wagner** and — if you care — was one of the earliest product placements of a Rolex in a film. Ownership will be a little expensive. New cost \$150. Now \$350,000. For that it should come with a mountain. CAN we discuss Crapdammy's great idea of cheap, cheap groceries in NY? An idea so effing smart it could've come right from the spittle of **Bernie Sanders**. I mean, like brilliant. Forget the diseased lettuce. May all New Yorkers get together and stare at the bread they can't afford or the milk that's costlier than an apartment and let's all march together in a line holding placards that read: "GREAT IDEA." Signed by Key Food, Gristedes, Whole Foods Market, Aldi, Costco, Stop & Shop, Wegmans, Trader Joe's, Morton Williams, Lidl, D'Agostino's, Target, Fulton Fish Market, Union Square farmers market, Citarella, ShopRite, BJ's Wholesale and a few churches. **Only in New York, kids, only in New York.**

Post Weather Report

Tuesday

Today: Partly sunny and humid. High 81 to 87.
Tonight: Clear. Low 68 to 74.

Wednesday

Tomorrow: Mostly sunny and less humid. High 84 to 90.
Tomorrow night: Mostly cloudy. Low 69 to 75.

Thursday

A shower or two. High 79 to 85.
Evening Partly cloudy. Low 64 to 70.

Friday

Partly sunny. High 77 to 83.
Evening A shower late. Low 65 to 71.

Almanac
YESTERDAY'S CONDITIONS AT CENTRAL PARK THROUGH 6PM
Temperature
High: 80, Low: 68, Mean: 74
Departure from Normal
Yesterday: 2 degrees
Precipitation
Yesterday: 0.48 , Month: 3.89 , Year: 26.60 , Normal year to date: 30.90
Cooling Degree days yesterday 9
Total for the month (normal) 222 (202)
Total since Jan. 1 (normal) 982 (903)
Last year to date 991
Heat Index (at noon yest.) 74
UV index (for Tue.) 8 (Very High)
Humidity (at noon) 97%
AIR QUALITY
Pollen: Moderate Predominant pollen: Weeds
AQI rating: (for Tue.).....Moderate

Forecast data is current as of 6 p.m. yesterday. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.

Weather (W): s sunny, pc partly cloudy, c cloudy, sh showers, r rain, t thunder storms, sf snow dr ries, sn snow, i ice

Forecast data is current as of 6 p.m. yesterday. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.

Weather (W): s sunny, pc partly cloudy, c cloudy, sh showers, r rain, t thunder storms, sf snow dr ries, sn snow, i ice

Sun and Moon
Sunrise today 6:09 a.m.
Sunset tonight 7:50 p.m.
Moonrise today 12:42 p.m.
Moonset today 10:30 p.m.
First Full Last New
Aug 19 Aug 28 Sep 4 Sep 10

Tuesday, August 18, 2026

Shown are areas of precipitation and high temperatures for the day.

AccuWeather Proven Superior Accuracy™ Visit AccuWeather.com

New York Tides

	TODAY	TOMORROW
High Tide for	1st 12:18a 2nd 12:52p	1st 1:07a 2nd 1:39p
Coney Island	12:18a 12:55p	1:05a 1:41p
Fire Island	3:58a 4:17p	4:49a 5:08p
Hempstead	3:55a 4:16p	4:45a 5:06p
Huntington	12:02a 12:36p	12:51a 1:23p
Jones Inlet	1:34a 2:05p	2:25a 2:58p
Montauk Point	4:02a 4:20p	4:55a 5:12p
Port Washington	12:22a 12:56p	1:11a 1:43p
Sandy Hook		

Regional cities

	TODAY	TOMORROW
Albany	82/59/pc	83/64/pc
Danbury	83/62/pc	87/64/pc
Glens Falls	81/56/pc	81/59/t
Gr Barrington	81/56/pc	83/61/pc
Kingston	84/60/pc	86/63/pc
Liberty	80/56/s	81/60/pc
Monticello	81/56/s	82/59/pc
Newburgh	85/62/pc	87/65/pc
Poughkeepsie	84/57/pc	87/63/pc
Saratoga Springs	83/57/pc	82/60/t
Stroudsburg	85/58/s	86/64/pc
Torrington	83/59/pc	85/62/pc
Syracuse	80/60/pc	77/61/t

World cities

	TODAY	TOMORROW
Athens	89/69/s	90/70/s
Baghdad	113/86/s	109/88/s
Beijing	89/70/r	89/73/pc
Berlin	68/60/r	66/57/sh
Cairo	93/75/pc	94/74/pc
Dublin	66/54/sh	65/52/sh
Geneva	85/59/pc	91/66/s
Hong Kong	91/82/r	91/82/t
Jerusalem	84/68/s	86/68/s
Kabul	93/68/pc	94/69/pc
London	79/60/c	76/55/pc
Madrid	102/74/s	96/69/s
Mexico City	77/56/sh	77/57/sh
Montreal	78/64/pc	71/59/t
Moscow	73/61/c	65/53/r
Paris	83/66/c	81/62/t
Rio de Janeiro	81/70/s	82/69/s
Rome	90/73/s	90/73/s
Sydney	65/50/sh	69/53/s
Tokyo	89/74/c	93/75/pc

Sibs to the 'rescue'

Fanning sisters Dakota (left) and Elle are among those making the scene in summery fashion on Monday for an adorable cause — the Animal Rescue Fund's Bow Wow Meow Ball in the Hamptons.

Plan to restore gun OKs

The Justice Department unveiled a new process Monday for people barred from owning firearms because of past criminal convictions to have their gun rights restored.

The launch of the "Federal Firearm Rights Restoration" application process marks one of Attorney General Todd Blanche's first actions as the head of the DOJ and a major victory for Second Amendment advocates, who have long argued that nonviolent felons should have an avenue to regain their right to bear arms.

Pardon Attorney Ed Martin said the finalized rule will pave the way for the "unprecedented restoration of firearms rights" to some "30 million Americans who have lost their Second Amendment rights."

Convicted felons have long been allowed to petition the government to have their gun rights restored, but in 1992, Congress defunded the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives program tasked with processing applications — effectively barring the federal agency from investigating and approving individual applicants.

The new rule aims to circumvent the issue by establishing a new application system using an online portal.

Restoration will be granted on a case-by-case basis, according to the DOJ.

Victor Nava, With Wires

Iris Zimmerman/INSTARimages



'OK' TO CHEW THE FAT

Study: Burgers can aid health

By RACHEL SACKS

One of the leading causes of death worldwide, cardiovascular disease affects your heart and blood vessels, and the risk increases with factors like cholesterol and diet — including hamburgers, a summer staple.

The next time you're at a barbecue, though, feel free to add a patty or two to your plate, thanks to research on the surprising effects of red meat on men's cholesterol.

Eating hamburgers too often is linked to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease and heightened cholesterol thanks to the amount of sodium and saturated fat in typical servings.

While moderation is key and a good old-fashioned hamburger can be made healthy with some simple swaps, one study is telling a different story about the health effects.

The study, published in the journal *Nutrients*, took a look at men's cholesterol and blood vessel health after eating multiple burgers during the week alongside a regular diet.

Of 23 men who ate five burgers per week for five weeks, the researchers found that adding high-fat ground beef (around 25% fat) or low-fat ground beef (about 5% fat) didn't harm blood vessels.

The positive changes from the high-fat beef may even be linked to lower cholesterol.

The team used flow-mediated dilation — a non-inva-

sive ultrasound test — to measure how well blood vessels widen when blood flow increases.

Beef with higher amounts of fat resulted in better blood vessel dilation, supporting proper blood flow and reducing blood pressure.

Lowered LDL

The low-fat beef didn't change blood vessel dilation, however.

The researchers believe the reduced blood pressure is connected to the surprising effects the high-fat beef had on cholesterol, namely "bad" cholesterol.

The data was collected from participants who had completed a previous study looking at the effects of high- or low-fat ground beef on cholesterol.

Despite an increased intake of saturated fat, the high-fat ground beef lowered low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL, or "bad" cholesterol).

LDL cholesterol causes plaque to build up in arteries, narrowing blood vessels and increasing the chances of heart disease and stroke.

Previous research has shown that diets heavy in red meat and animal fats raise LDL cholesterol levels, increasing the risk of heart disease.

Yet both types of beef also lowered "good" cholesterol that helps clear extra cholesterol from the blood vessels.

The study was the first to find that short-term consumption of high-fat beef reduced blood pressure and potentially cardiovascular disease risk.

Demand high for new luxe apts.



FAMOUS: A residential conversion of the Flatiron Building is nearly through, with the wealthy quickly buying apartments.

FLATIRON CORNERS MARKET

By MARY K. JACOB

New York's most-photographed landmark just became its hardest apartment to snag.

Nearly every unit publicly listed for sale at Manhattan's famed Flatiron Building has already found a buyer, cementing the century-old triangular landmark as the most sought-after residential conversion in Manhattan just as it prepares to open its doors this fall.

Of the 22 residences StreetEasy has shown as listed for sale at 175 Fifth Ave., only four remain unsold, putting the building at roughly 82% absorption on its public listings. That kind of pace for a building still finishing construction has stunned brokers who track the city's luxury new development pipeline.

The latest proof came last week, when the Flatiron Building notched its

second straight appearance atop Olshan Realty's weekly contract report.

Unit 17-North, a four-bedroom spanning 4,626 square feet with a 63-by-27-foot great room overlooking Madison Square Park, went into contract asking \$23.95 million. Its final price, as well as its forthcoming owner, are not yet known until the deal closes.

It marks the second time in three weeks that a unit inside the building has claimed the No. 1 spot in the report, a rare feat for any single address.

Few buildings anywhere carry the instant global recognition of the building's razor-thin silhouette, a shape so famous it lent its name to the entire neighborhood surrounding it. Built in 1902 to a design by Daniel Burnham, the 22-story tower spent well over a century as commercial office space before Mac-

millan Publishing, its last major tenant, moved out in 2019 and left the building largely vacant.

Two auctions

What followed was a saga befitting the property's outsized reputation. When the Flatiron Building's owners couldn't agree on its future, the property went to auction in 2023, where a little-known bidder named Jacob Garlick won with a bid of \$190 million and then vanished without ever putting down his deposit.

A second auction that spring produced a winning bid of \$161 million from those existing owners, which then partnered with the Brodsky Organization to reimagine the office relic as residential real estate.

The developers tapped Studio Sofield to handle the interiors, a decision



that has become central to the building's marketing pitch. The firm reworked the awkward angles created by the building's wedge-shaped floor plates into a layout of one north-facing and one south-facing unit per level, plus two sprawling full-floor residences on the top two stories.

Pricing across the 36 sellable units ranges from just under \$11 million for

a three-bedroom to \$58.5 million for the penthouse spanning the 21st floor. But not all units have hit the market yet, a representative for Corcoran Sunshine Marketing Group told The Post.

Residences are expected to be move-in ready this fall, with the building's full amenity package, including a 60-foot lap pool, slated to open in early 2027.

Charity for slain SI mom

The Staten Island mom shot dead in a suspected murder-suicide last week had dedicated her life to her young son — with “every hope she had for the future” focused on him, loved ones said in an online fundraiser.

Dana Foley, 39, was found with a fatal gunshot wound to the torso shortly after 11 a.m. Thursday inside a home on Garth Court, a quiet, tree-lined cul-de-sac street in the borough's Richmond neighborhood, authorities said.

Her boyfriend, Dakota Suckstorff, 27, who lived in the home, was found shot in the head and later pronounced dead at the hospital, police said.

A gun was recovered at the scene near Suckstorff's hand, law enforcement sources said Monday.

In a GoFundMe page, Foley — who lived more than five miles away in the Sunnyside neighborhood — was described as a loving mother who cared deeply for her son, Lennon.

“More than anything else in this world, Dana was Lennon's mom,” the organizer, Nicole DeMeo, wrote. “Lennon was her absolute pride and joy. Being his mother was the greatest purpose of her life and, without question, the thing she was most proud of.”

Amanda Woods

No trust for Reiner son

Attorneys for Nick Reiner on Monday urged a judge to allow him to use his \$1.5 million trust fund to pay for his defense against charges that he killed his parents, Hollywood director Rob Reiner and producer-photographer Michele Reiner.

Nick Reiner, 32, has pleaded not guilty to two counts of stabbing his parents to death in December.

A financial representative overseeing the trust set up by his parents in 1993 said funds cannot be released because of a “slayer statute” in California that prevents people from inheriting money from someone they intentionally killed. *Reuters*

GET ON STAGE & JAM WITH YOUR HEROES!

3 AMAZING CAMPS TO CHOOSE FROM THIS FALL

★ CELEBRATING 30 YEARS ★

NYC ROCK N ROLL FANTASY CAMP

4 DAYS. 4 ICONIC BANDS. ONE UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE.

★ FEATURING THE MUSIC OF ★

The KINKS **The WHO** **BILLY JOEL** **THE BAND**

ROCKSTAR COUNSELORS:

- ★ DEREK ST. HOLMES (TED NUGENT)
- ★ JIMMY VIVINO (CONAN O'BRIEN)
- ★ JOEL HOEKSTRA (WHITESNAKE)
- ★ VINNY APPICE (BLACK SABBATH)
- AND MORE!

PERFORM TWO LIVE SHOWS AT THE CUTTING ROOM

OCTOBER 22-25

★ 2026 ★

DAVE DAVIES
★ THE KINKS ★
PLUS

SIMON TOWNSHEND
THE WHO

LIBERTY DEVITTO
BILLY JOEL

AMY HELM
THE BAND

SPACES ARE LIMITED!
RESERVE YOUR SPOT TODAY

PRODUCED BY DAVID FISHOF

★ ROCKCAMP.COM/NYC ★

★ ALL AGES AND PLAYING LEVELS WELCOME! ★

FOURTH ANNUAL

WOMEN'S ROCK N ROLL FANTASY CAMP & SONGWRITER FANTASY CAMP

PERFORM LIVE AT TWO ICONIC HOLLYWOOD VENUES
Whiskey a Go Go & *THE VIPER ROOM*

JAM WITH

BELINDA CARLISLE
GoGo's

KATE PIERSON
the B-52's

KATHY VALENTINE
GoGo's

CHERIE CURRIE
THE RUNAWAYS

LISA LOEB
ARTIST & HIT SONGWRITER

BETH NIELSEN CHAPMAN
HIT SONGWRITER

ALL AGES AND SKILL LEVELS WELCOME!

NOVEMBER 5-8, 2026 **LOS ANGELES, CA**

LIMITED SPOTS!
RESERVE YOURS TODAY!

★ ROCKCAMP.COM ★

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS
NYC ROCK N ROLL FANTASY CAMP

Celebrating the Music of

VAN HALEN 5150

RATT DANCING UNDERCOVER

AND MORE '80'S ROCK!

NOVEMBER 12-15, 2026 - HOLLYWOOD, CA

MICHAEL ANTHONY
WHISKEY @ GOGO

WARREN DEMARTINI
RATT

KENNY ARONOFF
THE VAMPIRE

BRAD GILLIS
NIGHT RANGER

PERFORM LIVE AT: **WHISKEY @ GOGO** & **THE VIPER ROOM**

ALL AGES & PLAYING LEVELS WELCOME!

ROCK N ROLL FANTASY CAMP

ROCKCAMP.COM
PRODUCED BY DAVID FISHOF

SPOTS ARE LIMITED! RESERVE YOURS AT
ROCKCAMP.COM OR CALL 888-762-2263

ROCK N ROLL
FANTASY CAMP



By KYRA BRESLIN

By the time he turned 10, Jenna Ceriani's son was too heavy to play football.

The local league kicked the budding player out after he tipped the scales at 155 pounds — well above their 125-pound cap. The middle schooler's weight had become a safety liability for smaller players on the team, they explained.

"Every time I tackle someone, they call me a fat ass," Ceriani, who comes from the Boston area, recalled her rejected son telling her. She recounted that even before he got the boot, he'd stopped wanting to go to practice. "There was name-calling. It really did a number on his confidence."

Always a "bigger kid," hovering in the 99th percentile for weight, he'd already been struggling with sleep apnea, had undergone surgery to remove his tonsils and adenoids and was advised to lose weight by his doctors.

With health problems running in the family, the issue extended beyond fitting into a uniform.

"You want them to grow up healthy and not have diabetes," Ceriani told The Post.

With limited options remaining, the Cerianis made a provocative choice — to put their son on a GLP-1.

And not only for their son, but also their 14-year-old daughter, who struggled with food noise, metabolic dysfunction and was an extremely picky eater.

Ceriani told The Post that for her son especially, the decision to try a GLP-1 came only after years of stress and frustration following visits with a revolving door of specialists attempting to resolve his growing health issues, and feeling helpless.

"Does he need medication to do everything?" she questioned her doctor's treatment plans. "Even the sleep apnea doctor said he needs to lose weight, so why is it so hard for him to find a doctor to help him?"

'Early intervention'

Once reserved for adults with obesity, drugs like Wegovy and Zepbound are emerging as increasingly popular solutions for overweight children.

The parents and health professionals alike insist they're not being used as cosmetic weight-loss drugs for children, but as a tool to treat chronic diseases before they become lifelong burdens.

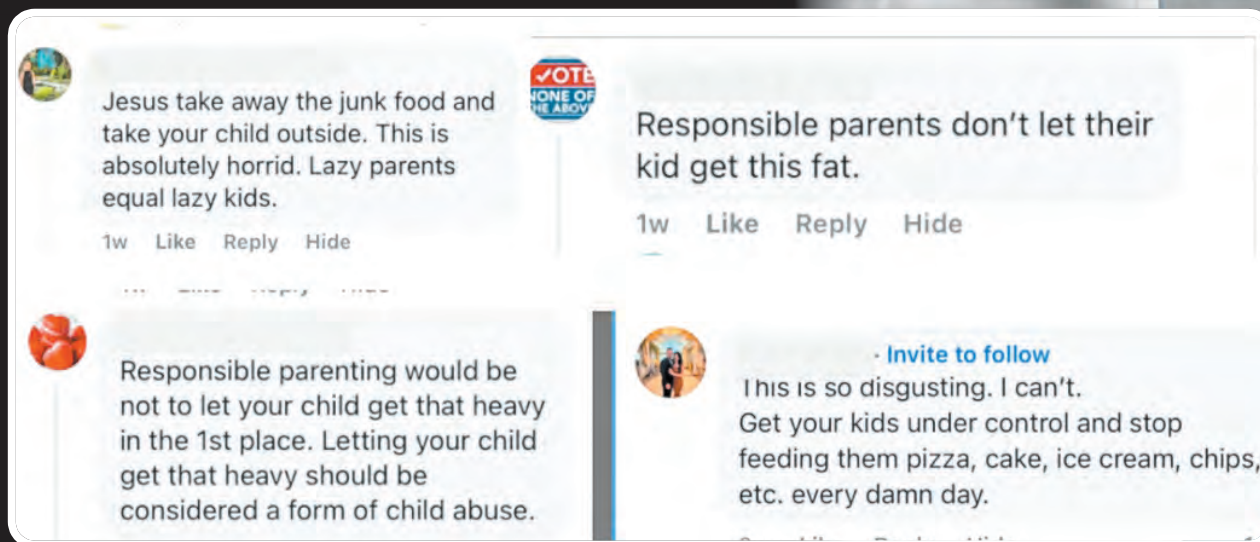
Nevertheless, it's a controversial practice, not least because pediatric GLP-1 use remains relatively rare.

Experts, however, say it is poised to grow. Yale researchers estimate that nearly 17 million adolescents and young US adults ages 12 to 25 meet current GLP-1 therapy criteria.

As studies have found meaningful improvements in cardiometabolic

Obese kids getting controversial

WEIGHT OFF PARENTS' SHOULDERS



stock.adobe.com

and renal health aside from weight, parents are increasingly curious about their options.

But a recent study published in JAMA Pediatrics of over 2 million adolescents with obesity found that fewer than 1% had received a prescription — often due to barriers like cost and insurance.

Some doctors are also cautioning that adverse effects or potential impacts on puberty or development have not been properly examined yet, and should raise red flags with parents.

Dr. Anna Trepekli, the co-founder of the virtual pediatric obesity clinic Hey Nouri, which treats Ceriani's son, disagrees,

and argues that the era of treating childhood obesity as a "lifestyle" issue is long over.

"People hear 'obesity' and think about how a body looks," she told The Post. "They're not thinking about how a body functions."

Trepekli says that framing GLP-1s as a treatment for a medical condition, rather than solely weight loss, allows clinicians to create what she calls a "window of opportunity" for children to build healthier habits through nutrition, exercise and behavioral support.

"A majority of the kids who are referred to see me in my field are being sent because it's not just their weight that's an issue. It is

their weight plus other comorbidities that have set in at a very young age that we need to correct, or we need intervention for," Dr. Shaista Safder, a pediatric obesity specialist at Orlando Health, told The Post.

Safder began treating children with obesity after seeing young patients develop fatty liver disease, which can progress to liver failure. Safder said physicians are increasingly trying to interrupt that trajectory before irreversible damage occurs.

"If the writing is on the wall, early intervention is so important," she added. "That's where the GLP-1s have helped change

the narrative for some of these patients who were really struggling otherwise. So there are real, true, valid, medically indicated reasons to use this."

For frustrated Pennsylvania mom Angela, who asked to use a pseudonym to protect her daughter's privacy, the decision wasn't about making her daughter thinner but rather understanding why an otherwise active teenager couldn't stop thinking about food.

The teenager, who plays various sports, had struggled with compulsive thoughts about food for years despite nutrition counseling, endocrinology visits and extensive blood work.

GLP-1 drugs, when everything else failed

25

New York Post, Tuesday, August 18, 2026

nypost.com



LOSING BATTLE: Parents who spoke to The Post about putting their children on GLP-1 drugs say they are aware of the negative criticisms about their parenting, like these social media comments (opposite page). But they and their healthcare providers say the decision is rarely a shortcut but rather comes after a litany of other tests, treatments and behavioral changes have failed to help their kids, whose weight puts them at an increased risk of health problems as adults.

There is a big perception that kids will just grow out of it, but we know that that's actually not what happens. Approximately 80% of these kids actually grow into obesity, not just obesity, but also all the comorbidities that exist around it.

—Dr. Anna Trepekli, co-founder of virtual pediatric obesity clinic Hey Nouri

As puberty progressed, she also hadn't begun menstruating, raising concerns about possible metabolic dysfunction.

Stigmatized

At 5-foot-3 and 171 pounds, her mother noticed her weight starting to balloon at 9 years old when her daughter was being home-schooled during COVID.

"Whenever they were stuck at home and not in the regimen of school, there was this major focus on food," Angela told The Post. "What's my next food? My next meal? This constant obsession with snacking."

Like any parent, she gave her daughter room to be herself. Still, the preoccupation with food became alarming when she would eat snacks in her room late at night, followed by bullying and self-esteem issues so profound it impacted her desire to go to homecoming and wear a dress.

"I was really trying to get to the root cause," Angela told The Post.

Six weeks after starting Wegovy, Angela says the biggest change hasn't been weight loss.

"She wasn't thinking about food as much," adding that she too has struggled with extra weight and found success on her own GLP-1 journey, losing 30 pounds.

"If this can help jump-start healthier habits now, I'm for it."

As pediatric GLP-1 use has expanded, so too has the backlash.

The debate has spilled onto social media, where parents are accused of taking shortcuts, fueling diet culture or medicating children for cosmetic reasons.

Ceriani has experienced it.

"I get what people are saying: 'You don't know [the side effects],' " she said. "I haven't spoken to a lot of parents because most of the kids are tiny — I wish I had more people to talk to about it."

Ceriani said she's aware there's a stigma around young GLP-1 use but is sure "we're not the only

family doing this."

Trepekli, who runs the obesity clinic, insisted that the families who arrive at her clinic have already tried nutritionists, sports programs, counseling and lifestyle changes before turning to medication.

"You never tell a child with asthma, 'Hey, just breathe better,'" she said.

"There is a big perception that kids will just grow out of it, but we know that that's actually not what happens. Approximately 80% of these kids actually grow into obesity, not just obesity, but also all the comorbidities that exist around it," she said, adding

that mental health is also extremely overlooked.

"With the weight loss, there is more confidence. They finally feel like they're successful in something they've been maybe trying to do and have tried and failed," Trepekli said, adding that many of their patients report feeling more confident in their clothes and being around their friends.

Despite the positive lifestyle effects, many physicians do not share Trepekli's enthusiasm for GLP-1 use for children. Among the critics are healthcare professionals who happily prescribe the drugs for adult patients.

"They're a much more vulnerable population," said Dr. Amanda Kahn, a longevity medicine doctor who regularly suggests the drugs to her adult patients. "We don't fully understand the long-term effects of these medications when you're putting them in a system where hormones and biology are changing drastically over time."

Side effects

Kahn says that while the reasons parents give are valid, she worries particularly about the drugs' studied effects on the dopamine and reward pathways, especially in developing brains. Early data shows that GLP-1 generally has positive effects in adults.

"We know it affects the reward pathway. So people don't smoke as much, they don't drink as much alcohol. Is it flattening a child's affect? That would be something I would watch out for," she said.

Despite the concerns, the parents that spoke with The Post explained that putting their children on the drugs has been a life-changing experience.

Ceriani recalled being so relieved to find Dr. Trepekli that she cried "tears of joy."

After nearly two months on Wegovy, she said her son's choices and behavior are improving. She has even been able to get him off ADHD medication.

"He is starting to be aware of the difference between boredom and true hunger. He's eating less, and he actually said 'I am full' one night," Ceriani said, adding that although she hasn't had many parents to confide in, she would encourage them to try it if their child was struggling.

Angela shares a similar sentiment: "I'm trying to ensure that the confidence outside matches what's on the inside. If this can help her jump-start these habits — then I'm for it for any child."

3.1% drug price drop ahead of midterms

BY STEVEN NELSON

WASHINGTON — The White House is crowing over a 3.1% dip in prescription prices as evidence that President Trump's pressure on drug companies is working — claiming Monday that it is the “steepest drop since 1963.”

Trump “promised to slash prescription drug prices — and he has delivered,” the White House said in a promotional email blast.

“New data confirms prescription drug prices just recorded their largest annual decline in more than 60 years, the steepest drop since 1963, as the Trump Administration's landmark Most Favored Nation policies take hold.”

Over the past year, Trump strong-armed major drugmakers into reducing what they sought from government programs such as Medicare and Medicaid while establishing a new platform called “TrumpRx” that lists discounts for people without insurance who are paying out of pocket.

The populist president won concessions by threatening Big Pharma with massive tariffs if it didn't move to align its prices with those paid by other major industrialized nations.

Trump frequently says Republicans should win the Nov. 5 midterm elections over the lower drug prices alone.

Pitch pays off

His threats to drug giants resulted in a parade of corporate executives traveling to the Oval Office for televised pledges to lower costs, along with specific offers to reduce cash bills, including high-profile cuts for GLP-1 drugs used for diabetes and weight loss, such as Ozempic and Wegovy, as well as for the fertility drug Gonal-F.

Pfizer committed in September to offer “TrumpRx” discounts for a range of products, including a savings of 85%, lowering costs to about \$30, for the menopause pill Duavee. The mega-drugmaker also shaved 85%, dropping costs to \$42, off the price of Tobias, which is used to treat overactive bladders, and slashed by 80%, to \$162 per tube, the price of ec-

zema ointment Eucrisa.

The drug giant agreed to cut the cost of migraine drug Zavzpret by 50%, to about \$600 per month without insurance, and to give a 40% discount for rheumatoid arthritis drug Xeljanz, bringing monthly costs to \$3,644.

The Trump-brokered deals, which Congress is considering codifying, follow former President Joe Biden's Medicare renegotiations

for the top 10 most common drugs, which Axios reported may have contributed to the price declines, a claim the White House disputes.

Trump's midterm sales pitch has focused heavily on his economic policies, including new tax cuts for senior citizens and people who earn tips and overtime wages, as well as on domestic car-loan interest — while pointing to a roaring stock market's impact on retire-

ment accounts. He has argued that increases in gas prices and inflation tied to the Iran war are temporary.

Trump meanwhile has threatened to haul in “rich” health insurance CEOs next to force them to slim their own profits.

His team's internal polling reportedly shows that hammering the industry could boost Republican candidates ahead of the congressional elections.



STRATEGY: President Trump (with Mehmet Oz, head of Medicare & Medicaid Services) says he negotiated lower drug prices.

Prescription for victory.

CNP/Bloomberg via Getty Images

Melania's Ukr. clan reunion

WASHINGTON — Melania Trump has reunited another Ukrainian child with their family, the 34th such joyful homecoming she has helped facilitate as the war with Russia continues.

“There is nothing more powerful than reuniting a mother with her child after an extended period of time,” the first lady said in a statement Monday. “My representative and I are focused on helping facilitate the next reunification of individuals who have been separated from their loved ones because of the war between Ukraine and Russia.”

Earlier this month, Trump announced she and her team helped a fifth group of Ukrainian and Russian children be reunited with loved ones. The Russian youngsters had been living in Ukraine with their families before the war started and got separated from kin.

As for Ukrainian children, thousands have been taken from homes and orphanages — mainly in the occupied east of the country — to Russia since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022.

The United Nations said in March it verified the kidnapping of more than 1,200 kids across five regions of Ukraine. The Ukrainian government claims the true number is as high as 20,000.

Trump wrote to Russian President Vladimir Putin in August 2025, urging him to protect children affected by the war. Her letter was hand-delivered by President Trump in Alaska.

Putin declared Melania had an “open channel of communication” with him, the first lady said. *Emily Goodin*

GOPer, Dem slam anti-Jew ad

GOP House Speaker Mike Johnson and Dem Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries have teamed up for a rare bipartisan rebuke of a Florida Republican pol who spewed vile antisemitic rhetoric against his primary foe.

Wannabe House member Dan Bilzerian rolled out a disturbing ad last

week attacking fellow Republican and incumbent Rep. Randy Fine as a “fat Jew,” “Shylock” and “satanic whore,” and suggesting whether it was worth revisiting Adolf Hitler's “opinions.”

The vile attack ads against Congressman Randy Fine in Florida's 16th District are disgusting

and should be condemned by all political leaders on the Right and Left,” Johnson said in a statement late Sunday.

About an hour later, Jeffries said: “The hateful campaign being run by Daniel Bilzerian in Florida is blatantly antisemitic and shocks the conscience.” *Ryan King*

Merry Mace shows off tats

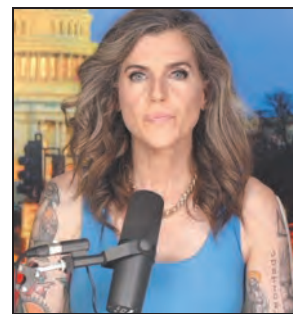
Firebrand GOP South Carolina Rep. Nancy Mace on Monday laughed off the internet's meltdown over the jaw-dropping new tattoos all over her arms.

Mace, 48, brought out her heavily inked guns during her new YouTube show last week (right) — and they took social media by storm, with critics on both sides of

the political aisle mocking and panning her rebellious new look.

“The utter apocalypse over my biceps is funny,” Mace wrote on X after right-wing pundit Laura Loomer jumped to her defense.

Mace actually got the ink months ago, but kept it covered up with sleeves until late last week. *Ryan King*





LUIGI MANGIONE
Arguing “double jeopardy.”

Mangione state trial delayed

Luigi Mangione’s state murder trial won’t start next month as planned — as he tries to avoid it entirely in light of his surprise guilty plea in his federal case.

Jury selection in the 28-year-old admitted killer’s Manhattan Supreme Court trial was set to start Sept. 8.

But Justice Gregory Carro on Monday pushed Mangione’s next appearance date to Dec. 10, postponing the trial indefinitely, court records show.

Mangione matter-of-factly pleaded guilty last week to two federal stalking counts that each carry a potential life sentence.

“On the morning of Dec. 4, 2024, I shot Mr. (Brian) Thompson in Manhattan, and he died,” Mangione told the court about the United-Healthcare CEO he gunned down on a Midtown street.

He now wants his state case tossed, arguing it would constitute “double jeopardy” — being tried for the same crime twice — in light of his federal plea. *Ben Kochman*

Ebola outbreak 2nd-worst ever

The ongoing Ebola outbreak is now the second-most lethal on record and the deadliest in the history of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Only the epidemic in West Africa in 2014-16 killed more people.

The grim milestone was reached on Sunday when government data showed that confirmed deaths topped the toll for Congo’s 2018-20 Ebola outbreak, previously the worst the country had seen. There are now 4,945 cases confirmed, including 2,325 deaths, the data showed. *Reuters*

Runs marathons barefoot SHOE AIN’T KIDDIN’!

By ALEX MITCHELL

It keeps him on his toes.

A Long Island ballroom-dance instructor doesn’t know the meaning of de-feet — running six marathons barefoot, including four in New York City.

“I do get, periodically, a little shard of glass or something in my foot, and what I say is that that’s what the bib pins are for,” quipped 57-year-old shoeless sensation John Mazzei of Lindenhurst to The Post.

“I could perform minor surgery on my feet now.”

Mazzei is used to getting looks, including during training, stomping on jagged roadside pebbles and other debris while running on the island’s bustling streets.

“I actually one time got pulled over by a police officer while I was running barefoot training for the [NYC] marathon,” the quirky runner recalled.

“I guess they thought I robbed somebody, but I said, ‘Actually, I was doing an 8-minute mile.’”

Mazzei won’t be running this year’s Big Apple 26.2-miler —

but only because he’s working to qualify for the Boston Marathon.

He has already heard it from marathon-route onlookers and folks in honking cars over the years, such as one Big Apple race fan who recognized him and yelled, “Barefoot John!” from a fire escape as he ran along.

Knees hurt

Before going barefoot in the park while trotting through Manhattan for the New York races, Mazzei would run the conventional way — with socks and shoes.

He first got into running around 43. But after just three months, his sneakers were ironically causing more pain on his knees than being barefoot ever has.

So he stepped away from running for a few years.

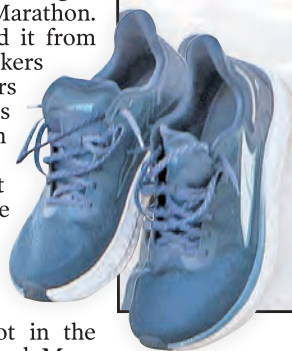
It was only after reading Christopher McDougall’s “Born to Run,” which focuses on the sports science behind barefoot running, that Mazzei gave it an-

other crack — sans shoes and socks.

Mazzei “hasn’t had any issues” with his knees since.

His new journey began with baby steps outside his house that turned into a 5K and greater distances, which conditioned his feet for the tasks to come.

“The hardest thing to run on is gravel,”



SECOND WIND:

John Mazzei of Lindenhurst, LI, took up barefoot running after training in shoes made his knees hurt. He’s run six marathons since and is trying to qualify for Boston.

Mazzei said. “I’ve done trail running and trail half-marathons and that stuff barefoot.”

Foot damage on regular pavement has been mainly incidental, but Mazzei remembers suffering blood blisters on the balls of his feet while running on a track one scorching day.

Mazzei opted for his first New York City Marathon in the early 2010s, nailing it in 3 hours and 48 minutes.

Dennis A. Clark for NY Post

Joe-commuted drug dealer reoffends

An Atlanta drug trafficker whose prior fentanyl-trafficking sentence was commuted by former President Joe Biden was arrested on new charges alleging he once again was distributing the deadly opiate Thursday, prosecutors said.

Walter Lee Muhammad, 46, appeared in federal court on possession with

the intent to distribute controlled substances charges in the Northern District of Georgia on Thursday, federal prosecutors said.

Muhammad’s most recent run-in with the law comes less than two years after then-President Biden commuted his decade-long sentence for a February 2020 federal conviction of pos-

session to distribute fentanyl, prosecutors said.

“Despite receiving a second chance, this defendant returned to trafficking fentanyl and putting lives at risk,” Jae W. Chung, special agent in charge of the DEA Atlanta Field Division, said in a press release.

Muhammad was one of 1,498 federal prisoners

whose sentences were commuted by Biden on Dec. 12, 2024, prosecutors said.

Feds said that Muhammad’s most recent charges stem from DEA agents catching him loading multiple bags of suspected drugs into his BMW on Aug. 5 in Atlanta, before he drove his vehicle over 330 miles away to Greensboro, NC.

A traffic stop by a K-9 with the Guilford County Sheriff’s Office in the Tar Heel State helped lead authorities to the 29 kilograms of suspected cocaine in Muhammad’s vehicle, and suspected fentanyl and heroin in his apartment, leading to his arrest on charges of intent to distribute controlled substances. *David DeTurris*

MSG fall death an accident

The death of a married father of two who plunged from a 150-foot-high balcony during a Goose concert at Madison Square Garden earlier this summer was officially ruled an accident, officials said Monday.

Nearly two months after Paul Kueker, 51, of Connecticut, took a head-first dive from a balcony in the 300s section of the arena while celebrating his 25th wedding anniversary with his wife, the city medical examiner's office determined his death was accidental.

Kueker, of Niantic, succumbed to "multiple blunt impact injuries," officials said.

He "appeared intoxicated" and "under the influence" before he tumbled over the 4-foot-high glass barrier shortly before 10 p.m. June 20, law-enforcement sources previously told The Post, quoting witnesses.

"Within a few seconds, I was standing in blood," one horrified witness told The Post.

Amanda Woods

CALLING THE SHOT

Gunfire detector may lead to plate-reader

By BRANDON CRUZ

Suffolk County quietly finalized a five-year, nearly \$4 million deal for new gunshot detectors with controversial surveillance network Flock Safety — and AI-powered cameras could be next.

Flock Safety's technology will replace the Shot-Spotter system, which the Long Island county has used for more than a decade to detect gunshots and notify first responders, officials confirmed to The Post.

The new devices from Flock Safety — the same company behind the AI-powered license-plate readers that can track a car's every move based on dents, bumper stickers and roof racks — are expected to be fully installed, covering 23.5 square miles in Suffolk, by Sept. 6, the officials said.

The switch from Shot-



Spotter will save the county about \$800,000 per year, according to Jed Painter, general counsel of the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office, who led the contract negotiations.

The contract does not include any controversial AI-powered Flock cameras, which critics have called a "Big Brother"-style surveillance system for local governments and have raised Fourth Amendment

concerns nationwide

But that may change in the near future, according to Painter. "We did not negotiate anything with Automated License Plate Readers or cameras ... yet," he said.

Painter said he finds Flock's tech "appealing," and was adamant that more of the company's devices and additional gunshot detectors could be on their way to the county.

This includes not only floating the idea of installing the controversial cameras around the county, but also potentially upgrading to Flock's "Raven" system, which can not only detect gunshots, but also listens for and reports car crashes and even loud community disruptions, according to Painter.

The county doesn't currently operate any of the cameras itself — but multiple towns, villages and even private-housing communities around Long Island have formed their own contracts with Flock Safety to install the eyes in the sky.

The contract will allow law enforcement to cross-reference any potential gunshot detection with any local municipality's or private community's own Flock cameras to track vehicles that were in the area when a shot is detected.

bcruz@nypost.com

'Peep perv' works for NJ school

A Peeping Tom caught looking into a young Pennsylvania girl's bedroom in the dead of the night works with children one state over, according to police and a report.

Winfield Becker, a 48-year-old athletic director for a New Jersey school district, was seen peering through the bedroom window of his young neighbor in Cabin Run, Bucks County, around 10:40 p.m. on Aug. 6, the Plumstead Township police said.

The footage allegedly shows Becker leering at the girl from just outside her window, according to the police report.

Becker is the athletic director for the nearby Hopewell Valley Regional School District in New Jersey, the Trentonian reported.

Becker's attorney Thomas Logan said, "We look forward to his appearance in court where he can vindicate his name against these baseless accusations."

David DeTurris

Sally Brompton Daily Horoscope



DISCOVER MORE ABOUT YOURSELF AND WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS AT SALLYBROMPTON.COM

LEO (July 24-Aug. 23)
The pressure to show people in positions of power what you can do seems to be getting to you, so focus your attention on activities that do not require you to be on top of your game every single minute. If it's not fun, then don't do it.

VIRGO (Aug. 24-Sept. 23)
If you find yourself losing interest in what you are doing, that's probably a sign that you have taken your current project as far as it can go. There is no shame in changing your objective, so adjust your aim and go after a more interesting goal.

LIBRA (Sept. 24-Oct. 23)
It's OK to open up and show people your vulnerable side, in fact it may be essential right now. Someone you love needs to be reminded that you have real human feelings and that your deepest feelings are reserved exclusively for them.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22)
You may get a bit touchy today and say things that others do not enjoy, because you have reached the point where you can no longer be bothered to hide your emotions. That's good — you need to let it out — but don't lose control completely.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21)
If you feel the need to take a break today, then do so and don't worry that other people might not approve. You have worked long and hard to reach your current elevated position and have more than earned some down time.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20)
As a cardinal sign, your status in the world means a lot to you, but don't let it influence you to

such an extent that you lose sight of what else is important. Does a loved one need your support? Then focus mainly on them today.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)
Money may be important, but it cannot be allowed to influence every decision you make. Even if you don't know where the next dollar is coming from, just push ahead with your plans and trust that the universe will take care of your needs.

PISCES (Feb. 20-Mar. 20)
Venus in the partnership area of your chart will give a boost to a relationship that has been on a downward slope for quite a while. Keep your eyes and ears open today and be ready to act when an opportunity to patch things up arises.

ARIES (March 21-April 20)
Your creative powers are now at their height, so be sure to make good use of them. The Sun and Jupiter in your fellow Fire sign of Leo urge you to believe in your abilities and to make a name for yourself in the wider world.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21)
Venus, your ruling planet, is moving through the work and well-being area of your chart, which among other things means there is no need to go to extremes. If you keep the pace slow and steady today, you will prove your worth with ease.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21)
It may seem as if too many things are coming easy to you now, but the universe does not

play tricks, you really are a favored one. Ignore those who say you should be working harder and focus on having fun with friends and loved ones.

CANCER (June 22-July 23)
The best way to take your mind off your money worries is to pretend they don't exist, while at the same time working on something that does not depend on how wealthy you are. There's still a lot of stuff out there that can be enjoyed for free.

BIRTHDAY TUESDAY
You are not an army of one, nor do you exist in a vacuum, and it is what you do as part of a team that will bring success this year. Working with others will help you to express yourself in ways you could never do on your own.

Diversity Cult

Jason Arday is a victim — of DEI, not media

BEHOLD the human wreckage of the cult of diversity. The tragedy of Jason Arday — the Cambridge professor found dead of apparent suicide amid an ugly plagiarism scandal — is that he was both built up and destroyed by the ruthless machinery of DEI.

The academy made him into the golden boy of its philistine project of “decolonization” and gave not one thought to what the consequences might be if his thin story unraveled, as it inevitably would.

No one can deny it now: Wokeness makes false gods and real tragedies. Journalists found a story and they told it; it was the academy and Arday’s colleagues who failed to do their jobs.

The death of Arday is not only dreadful — it is enraging. It feels like a catastrophe foretold. Indeed, some of us wondered out loud if Arday had friends around him as the media storm over his alleged fabulism grew and went global.

It was reckless in the extreme for the intellectual elites to fashion a new “black genius” and then say “Oops” when his carefully curated legend started to fray at the seams. They condemned him with their fawning.

This is the poison chalice of the state religion of diversity. It lays traps for the very people it celebrates.

It hand-picks members of “the oppressed” for moral anointment and institutional gushing while leaving them open to exposure as others start to query their credentials. That’s the toxic bargain of identity politics: It builds teetering pedestals for ethnic-minority thinkers, meaning their fall from grace is often twice as fatal.

And what a pedestal they made for Arday. They worshipped him as “the best in the world.” They beatified him as a black wunderkind whose very presence in a place such as Cambridge might help to wash away its sins of whiteness. They canonized him as a living monument to “decolonization.”

It was precisely this, their giddy, narcissistic desire to manufacture a kind of black savior, that made them turn a blind eye to the questionable elements of Arday’s CV and life story. They



Misplaced blame: Journalists did their job on the Jason Arday story — but DEI-drenched academia ignored merit and swallowed his fraud.

sacrificed their due diligence to the god of decolonization.

And Arday suffered, as both poster boy and sacrificial lamb of the diversity crusade. Even as he gained from it — reaching the dizzying heights of a Cambridge professorship — he was being

damned by it.

The foundation of myth and sand on which his starry career was built was untenable; its collapse was a given. It is a testament to the ideological blindness of the inhabitants of our ivory towers that none of them foresaw it.

This is where we cut to the rancid heart of identity politics. I have seen it reported that some black thinkers had reservations about Arday, but they chose to keep them hidden.

In other words, their devotion to the cult of diversity outweighed their concern for a friend in the grip of fabulism. Propping up the edifice of identity politics mattered more than guarding a colleague from a coming tempest that was always going to be as fierce as it was predictable.

They preferred to bask in the half-light of “black genius” rather than look out for a black colleague. The Faustian ruthlessness of it all is mind-blowing.

Already, leftists are blaming the media for Arday’s death.

Hacks hounded him into despair, they say.

I’m not having this. The media is the only institution in this entire tragic scandal that did its job properly — journalists found a story and told it.

It was the academy and Arday’s colleagues who failed to do their jobs. They failed to prize merit over identity, and failed to foresee the public embarrassment that would befall their falsely promoted friend. They ignored the truth — and the media found it.

I and others have been arguing for years that the politics of identity is a disaster for all, black and white alike. White kids are overlooked; black kids are patronized. Whites are branded “privileged,” blacks as “oppressed.”

Whites are seen as the beneficiaries of historic crimes who must atone for past sins, blacks as history’s perma-victims who require the gracious helping hand of the state. We are all demonized or infantilized according to the accident of our race.

Enough: Let our monument to Jason Arday be the restoration of the true ideal of equality.

We couldn’t save him, but we can save merit from the monstrous jaws of identity.

Brendan O’Neill is chief political writer for spiked. Reprinted with permission from The Spectator UK.

BRENDAN O’NEILL

FAST TAKES

Fairness watch: Uncle Sam Enriches the Old

The US entitlements system offers “support” to “senior citizens when they are most vulnerable,” notes Chris Pope at City Journal, but is “overdoing it” by redistributing “far more from young to old than from rich to poor.” Working-age Americans “are three times more likely than seniors” to face severe financial stress. Seniors even spend “less out of pocket on health care” than the young though they’re “admitted to hospitals roughly five times more often.” Social Security “redistributes substantially to seniors but in complex and contradictory ways,” frequently to the “benefit of affluent households.” With “younger Americans” being “much more exposed to income shocks,” the feds should help “younger adults by reducing their tax burden” by letting young workers borrow “from their own recent prior payroll tax contributions.”

Energy beat: Mine, Baby, Mine!

“Before America can build the infrastructure needed to power” its future, argues Susan Atkinson at The Hill, “we must first secure the critical minerals that make those technologies possible.” “There is no clean energy transition without mining” for copper, lithium, graphite, nickel, cobalt, rare earth elements and uranium. Washington hasn’t yet moved with the necessary “urgency to develop the mineral supply chains” new technologies require. “Today, developing a new mining project can take well over a decade,” a big reason why “China dominates much of the world’s processing and refining of critical minerals” — “a national security vulnerability.” Time to admit that our “clean energy future does not begin with a battery, a solar panel, or a wind turbine. It begins beneath the ground.”

Campus watch: Learning Centers on Passion

“Today’s educational problems are often attributed to a deficit of focus or attention,” but “we’re really talking about passion” — or its lack, great-books-program professor Matt Dinan explains at The New York Times. Teaching a class on “The Brothers Karamazov” was a revelation that we “need to recover the passion that drove us to our books, to the lab. We need to embody love of learning for its own sake against the pervasive message that higher education should be vocational, and we need to clarify the basic questions that make our subjects worth studying.” “For Dostoyevsky, worldly common sense can make us unwitting fools”; similarly, “remaining a passionate student yourself may well feel ridiculous nowadays, but it is ultimately nothing more than realism about what education requires.”

Midterms beat: ‘Double Haters’ Are Key



Abdul El-Sayed

A new Fox poll on the Michigan Senate race highlights “a phenomenon that Democrats worry might be repeated elsewhere: that the ongoing conflict between the party’s moderate and progressive wings will diminish otherwise loyal Democrats’ desire to support party nominees in November,” observes the Washington Examiner’s Byron York. The poll found “Republican Mike Rogers leading Abdul El-Sayed, the Democratic Socialists of America-adjacent Democrat, 51%-47%.” Dems are hoping Michigananders’ “deep disapproval of President Trump” will rally them to El-Sayed. But they also fear voters may find El-Sayed’s positions “too extreme.” Indeed, “among those with an unfavorable opinion of Trump, 35% said they had such concerns about El-Sayed.” These “double haters” may well “determine who controls the Senate” next year.

CentComm chief: Thank you, Military Families

“The true foundation of American sea power isn’t measured in steel, nuclear reactors, high-tech aviation or surface platforms,” notes Adm. Brad Cooper in The Wall Street Journal after his Saturday visit aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln: “It is measured in human endurance, character and the strength of the American military family.” Yes, the strike group “engaged in arguably the most intense combat at sea the Navy has seen since World War II,” but troops chatting with Cooper “spoke not of headlines or high-level strategic maneuvers, but of missed birthdays, first steps captured on video calls, high-school graduations and the quiet sacrifices unfolding thousands of miles away back home.” So, “to their loved ones who continue to wait, pray, and hold down the home front: Thank you. Your strength makes their service possible, and your wait is coming to an end.”

— Compiled by The Post Editorial Board

A Job Tish James Won't Do

State Attorney General Tish James *should* be digging into the \$100 million pit of waste, lost opportunities and likely self-dealing that is the West Harlem Development Corp., but she's too busy posing for cameras and losing lawsuits against the Trump administration.

Columbia University funded the WHDC in 2009 after it got the state to use eminent domain to help it swallow a huge chunk of the neighborhood. The nonprofit was supposed to invest that \$100 million in Harlem development projects, with \$20 million earmarked to build affordable housing.

Instead, the WHDC became a spout of patronage, handing out grants to small Harlem arts or youth groups, paying fat salaries to connected insiders and (bizarrely) allegedly helping draw up the Council on American Islamic Relations' "strategy on responding" to Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, terror attacks.

Not much development or housing at all; just a conduit for money, power and influence in the hands of highly connected insid-

ers like current Chair Milton Tingling and Executive Director Zead Ramadan.

Ramadan is the central figure in a federal lawsuit against the WHDC, brought by its terminated housing-development chief Vincent Morgan, who taped Ramadan's allegedly racist rants about Dominicans, African-Americans and Jewish control of the city. (Ramadan has denied any wrongdoing.)

So where is AG James, whose duties include policing New York tax-exempt charitable organizations? She's not shy about suing groups she dislikes, from the NRA to the Catholic Church, but declines to lift even an eyebrow about the scandalous WHDC.

The West Harlem Development Corp. is a poster child for the deep-rooted waste that defines so much "economic development" in New York, and the "community benefits" blackmail surrounding most large projects.

And that, no doubt, is *why* Tish James won't do a thing to liberate the tens of millions still in the WHDC hoard for the actual good of the community.

Shaking Down Meta

A quartet of state attorneys general and a pack of plaintiffs attorneys haul Meta into federal court in tort-hellhole Oakland on Tuesday — out to milk as many billions as they can from the tech giant in the name of protecting America's kids.

Of course, if that were their *true* goal they'd be going after TikTok and YouTube first, since teens use both much more, not Instagram's owner. But Meta has the deepest pockets, a market cap of \$1.5 trillion ... just about the damages the litigants seek.

Nor is this case actually about any real harm done to any child: It centers on Meta's supposed violations of 1950s-era state business-practices and consumer-protection laws, as the AGs claim that company leaders said the app was "safe" even as they pushed to make Instagram enjoyable enough that kids kept coming back. Some key points:

1) The plaintiffs bar has gobbled up hundreds of billions from "safety" litigation these last few decades, without making much of anything safer.

2) State AGs have been getting in on the act for years now, reaping personal *political* rewards, likewise with no gains for society.

3) Lawsuits like this would transform the US legal treatment of tech into something much like that of the European Union — laws that blocked the tech revolution there, so that the EU has seen almost zero economic growth this century.

4) Bankrupting Meta (or just bleeding it a lot) won't fix a thing. If society wants to do something about children's use of tech, it needs to pass laws that address the issue: Maybe start by mandating age-verification safeguards, parental controls, etc. be *factory-installed* on the smartphones the kids use — phones an adult is almost always paying for.

The Oakland case, like hundreds of suits about teens and social media across the nation, isn't about fixing anything; it's all nothing but legal and political sharks profiteering by *pretending* to stand up for the little guy. This racket is as despicable as anything they claim to be fighting against.

If Mamdani Ran the Circus . . .

Why are New York City politicians so confident in their ability to micromanage the private sector when so few of them have ever held an adult job there?

Mayor Mamdani just gave his backing to the Teamsters-supported Delivery Protection Act, which would force Amazon to directly employ "last-mile" delivery drivers rather than contract out the work.

What's wrong with using contractors to save money? The city itself contracts out *billions* in social-services work.

For all the talk about affordability, this would cost New Yorkers hundreds of dollars a year in higher delivery costs, because Amazon won't eat the added expense.

And hundreds of New Yorkers would lose their jobs, while the small-scale firms that employ them go out of business or leave town to operate outside City Hall's reach.

Amazon doesn't have to put warehouses inside the five boroughs, either: This idiocy will likely also force longer delivery times, more traffic congestion and more pollution.

This is a moronic effort to curry favor with the Teamsters in the name of bashing big bad Amazon, but the perverse results *should* be obvious.

Before the politicians meddle any more in industries they clearly don't understand at all, they should invest some sweat into improving how the government *they* run works.

Luigi Admits His Guilt: Now Lock Him Up for Life

•Luigi Mangione stalked and killed the innocent CEO of UnitedHealthcare, claiming he was a victim of a health problem, and you have idiots coming to his defense ("Sick cult of idiotic fan-girls," Kirsten Fleming, Aug. 15).

This is the most ridiculous story from start to finish. This man is a murderer and needs to go to jail for life.

These people, including his attorney, need to check themselves. Murder is murder and you do not get a free, pass. Young women sending money and love to this guy need to stop and get help.

Kate Phelan
Boca Raton, Fla.

•Mangione is a diabolical murderer who is deserving of the death penalty. Any decent, righteous person should agree that this assassin should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Yet he has become a darling to a cult of young, delusional people.

The visibly distraught widow of Brian Thompson had to come face-to-face with the sinister Mangione in court. Upon departing, she was disgracefully confronted by a cult of deviant misfits chanting "America loves Luigi." What a toxic, morally toxic society we live in.

Denis David
East Rockaway

•The lawyers for Luigi Mangione, who wasn't even a customer of UnitedHealthcare, claimed his murderous rage was attributed to "chronic" back pain. Who doesn't have back pain? Should everybody who has it kill a health-care executive?

As for the "Mangionistas," when you come to your senses, if you ever

THE ISSUE: Luigi Mangione pleading guilty in the murder of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson.



do, you'll be ashamed of what you've done.

This is really sick and abnormal behavior. I suggest you find a just cause to rally around — not a psychopath. **Louie Rey**
Summerville, SC

•Mangione's court statement that he understood his action would place Thompson "in fear of death" is an egregious falsehood. This coward shot an innocent man in the back. Thompson was executed with absolutely no warning.

Mangione should never experience another day of freedom. **Chas Hunt**
Sandy Hook, Conn.

•Fleming's account of the "Mangionistas" calls to mind a warning issued nearly 40 years ago by Allan Bloom in "The Closing of the American Mind."

Bloom charged that universities, in the name of "openness," taught relativism: distrust of objective truth, of the Western intellectual inheritance and of universal standards of moral judgment.

Mangione has admitted to killing Thompson. Yet fans can transform murder into an act of protest and its perpetrator into a martyr. Rather than asking whether the act was right or wrong, they ask

who committed it and against whom.

Relativism did not open the American mind — it erased the standards by which a civilized society distinguishes grievance from justification and political protest from murder.

Candace de Russey
Fleetwood

•Mangione should receive punishment to the full extent of the law, though I believe medical-insurance fees are getting out of hand.

I'm 77, and my wife is 73. I have Stage 4 cancer, and UnitedHealthcare is raising my premiums.

I feel the American people are victims of insurance companies and something must be done. That said, murder is wrong — even if you disagree with a company's policies.

Frederick Bedell Jr.
Bellerose

•There should be no doubt that Mangione should spend the rest of his life behind bars with no chance for parole.

Is our federal justice system so warped that an evil assassin who killed an innocent family man in cold blood would warrant any mercy?

Mangione showed no mercy to Thompson, and the court should treat him the same.

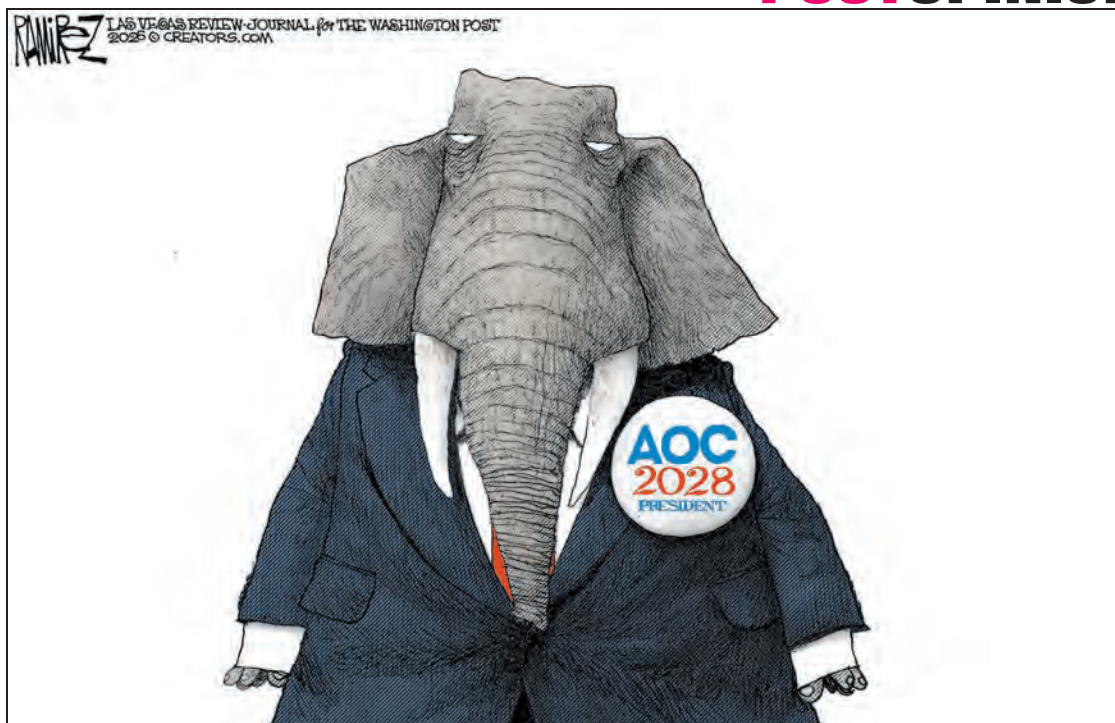
Gerald Jacobs
Boca Raton, Fla.

•As an attorney, I wouldn't have had Mangione make this plea deal because of all the people who expressed support for him. The outcome of any trial probably would have resulted in a hung jury.

Robert Berk
Manhattan

E-MAIL: letters@nypost.com or **WRITE** to The Editor, The New York Post, 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036. Include name, address and daytime phone number. No unverifiable letters will be published. The Post reserves the right to edit all letters.

The New York Post is published by N.Y.P. Holdings Inc., 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036. Lachlan Murdoch, Chair; Rupert Murdoch, Chairman Emeritus; Sean M. Giancola, Publisher; Keith Poole, Editor-in-Chief; Stephen Lynch, Print EIC; Mark Cunningham, Editorial Page Editor



ALBANY'S E-BIKE FIX

GETTING hit by an e-bike has become such a recognizable hazard of New York City life that “Saturday Night Live” has repeatedly spoofed it as Gotham’s hottest “new way to die.”

“There’s a menace on the streets of our city,” Scarlett Johansen warbled in a musical skit last year. “Suddenly e-bikes — they’re trying to kill me.”

But it’s no laughing matter for our pedestrians, who have adapted by developing a new reflex at every intersection: Look left; look right; then look again — for the e-bike coming at you out of nowhere. The city has seen nine fatal e-bike collisions this year — and counting.

I introduced Priscilla’s Law in Albany to tackle this deadly danger in 2024. It’s a straightforward concept: E-bikes and e-scooters operating in New York City should be registered with the state Department of Motor Vehicles, and should carry visible license plates.

The law is named for Priscilla Loke, a beloved Chinatown teacher who was struck by an e-bike in September 2023 and died from severe head trauma. Her hit-and-run death exemplified a fear New Yorkers were already feeling.

We license and register motor vehicles for good reason: If a driver hits you and leaves the scene, the license plate gives us a way to identify the offender’s vehicle. But e-bikes are unregistered, making identification practically impossible. According to Janet Schroeder of the E-Vehicle Safety Alliance, riders flee the scene in 90% of e-bike crashes — so no police report can be filed.

In the last two years, Albany has taken no final action on the bill. But public outcry has only grown.

At town halls across the city — from my South Queens district to the Upper West Side to Brownsville — I’ve seen widespread support for Priscilla’s Law, making this issue impossible to ignore.

This year, we finally made a breakthrough: The state Legislature held a public hearing devoted to e-bikes and e-scooters. Representatives of the Department of Motor Vehicles testified that they stand ready to implement whatever regulatory framework the Legislature may adopt. That means Priscilla’s Law is within reach.

Legislative lawyers and lawmakers have spent years studying the issue, and the DMV has the regulatory expertise to implement it. Together,

JENIFER RAJKUMAR

they can resolve the remaining details and get this done. There’s only one obstacle: political will.

As City Council Speaker Julie Menin has pointed out, City Hall can’t substitute for Albany here. She has rightly called for the state to handle e-bike licensure and registration, and I agree: This is fundamentally a state responsibility.

The state already has the DMV, the agency with the infrastructure, expertise and law-enforcement framework to register vehicles, issue identifying information and maintain records. Rather than build a parallel city-only system from scratch, Albany should put the DMV’s existing machinery to work — and provide the enforcement tool New York City needs.

New York would hardly be alone here. Just this year, New Jersey enacted a law requiring e-bikes to be

registered through its Motor Vehicle Commission. Registration and identification requirements for certain classes of electric bikes are already used in Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands and Denmark, while major Chinese cities have adopted registration and license-plate requirements for them.

Those who oppose Priscilla’s Law often claim that regulation will hurt delivery workers, many of whom are immigrants struggling to make ends meet. My immigrant-majority district is home to many delivery workers, and I believe the opposite: Priscilla’s Law will make the roads safer for *everyone*, e-bike operators included. License plates will allow us to address dangerous riding through ordinary traffic enforcement and tickets — rather than through criminal penalties that could jeopardize a worker’s immigration status.

Another objection relates to the measure’s cost: DoorDash and other delivery companies have powerful interests in Albany — and every incentive to resist regulations that could increase their expenses. But these are multibillion-dollar companies whose business models use our streets to make thousands of e-bike trips every day. They can afford to absorb the reasonable costs of making that system safer — but we can’t afford the prospect of losing one more life to a recklessly operated e-bike.

We don’t need another year of studies, speeches and excuses. We need to pass Priscilla’s Law — and finally give New York City the e-bike accountability system its residents demand.

Jenifer Rajkumar represents South Queens in the state Assembly.

Dems’ SC Gambit Targets DSA’s Rise

DON’T believe the Democratic National Committee’s official storyline: Its decision to make South Carolina the first Democratic presidential primary in 2028 isn’t about more racial diversity in the early contests. It’s about keeping power in the hands of the party establishment — the people who backed Hillary Clinton in 2016 and Joe Biden in 2020, and likely Kamala Harris in 2028. The fix is in.

South Carolina was the establishment’s firewall against Bernie Sanders’ left-wing insurgency twice over. In 2016, Sanders nearly beat Hillary Clinton in the first caucus, in Iowa, and went on to defeat her in the New Hampshire primary. Four years later, there was a brief moment when Sanders looked like the frontrunner — until he got clobbered by Joe Biden in South Carolina.

It’s true that the black voters who make South Carolina’s primaries more racially diverse than the contests in Iowa or New Hampshire are also less politically radical. So it’s easy for the DNC to say it’s not trying to choke off support for the socialist wing of the party; it’s just giving black voters more of a say.

The Democratic Socialists of America, the left fringe of the party, is disproportionately white — even its New York City chapter is 60% white, according to DSA’s own membership polling. That’s astonishing, considering NYC itself is only 34% white.

This racial split between the Democrats’ most ideologically intense faction and the party’s elite, which only holds on to power thanks to black voters’ loyalty, is a fault line with the potential to reshape American politics. South Carolina doesn’t just lean toward establishment Democrats, it backs



DANIEL MCCARTHY

into the blue column. Georgia is the test case: The state has prospered under Republican leadership, but that prosperity has fueled the growth of Atlanta, and has turned many of the city’s suburbs blue.

Virginia, of course, has already become a purple state, if not a reliably Democratic one. The growth of the Old Dominion’s deep-blue DC suburbs — which keep extending further into Virginia’s interior — is not so different from the effect Atlanta is having on Georgia.

North Carolina is another weak link in the Republican party’s southern wall. So despite backing recent losers — Hillary Clinton a decade ago, Biden and Harris both in the

‘There’s a knife fight for control . . . and these pieces won’t fit together easily.’

them overwhelmingly — nearly three-quarters of the state’s Dem primary voters chose Clinton over Sanders in ’16, while Biden beat Sanders there in ’20 by a ratio of more than two-to-one.

A candidate like Harris or her fellow Californian Gavin Newsom fits that profile, and Harris’ unbeatable name recognition and diversity qualifications likely give her an edge. DSA members won’t stay home and let another Republican succeed Donald Trump — but if the establishment candidate goes on to lose in November ’28, the party will be ripe for a revolution.

Will black voters who have so far resisted Sanders-style socialism be just as content with a DSA-led party as they have been with the Democrats’ old guard?

Meanwhile, with Republican states growing while blue states like California shed population and businesses, the Democrats face a terminal problem in the Electoral College and in the US House of Representatives. With each decennial census, Republicans stand to gain House seats and electoral votes.

But Democrats can offset the GOP’s growth advantages if they start flipping southern states back

last election — the Democratic establishment thinks it’s hit upon a strategy both for keeping control of the party and wresting the South away from Republicans.

And it’s confident the DSA will fall in with the party line: After all, the elite Democrats are more allergic to the socialist *label* than they are to socialist policies. They can give DSA much of what it wants.

Yet a plan is one thing — the reality is there’s a knife fight for control of the Democratic Party, and these pieces won’t fit together easily. And while the Democrats’ emerging opportunities are in the South, the party’s ideologically ascendant faction is the least suited to capitalize on them.

That gives Republicans a chance to stop both the Democrats’ socialism and their racial spoils system. To do it the GOP will have to campaign for the South like it’s a battleground region — and slow, even if it can’t immediately reverse, the drift of America’s cities to the left.

Republicans need the South *and* the Rust Belt — the combination that meant victory in 2016 and 2024. If they can’t compete in cities, even those in flourishing red states, the party is on the road to extinction.

The Post Puzzle Page

SCRABBLE

Hasbro and its logo, SCRABBLE®, associated logo, the design of the distinctive SCRABBLE brand game board, and the distinctive letter tile designs are trademarks of Hasbro in the United States and Canada. ©2026 Hasbro. All rights reserved. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

A1A1E1S1B3N1M3

A1E1U1C3D2T1N1

A1I1O1R1N1K5D2

A1I1U1H4T1M3Z10

Double Word Score

2nd Letter Triple

RACK 1

RACK 2

RACK 3

RACK 4

PAR SCORE 155-165
BEST SCORE 234

FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

SOLUTION

RACK 1 = 72
RACK 2 = 60
RACK 3 = 11
RACK 4 = 91
TOTAL 234

TODAY'S ANSWER

SCRABBLE G R A M S
G R A M S
E T I O U J
S I A I I I
B J D A

PAR SCORE 155-165

DIRECTIONS:

Make a 2 to 7 letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word using scoring directions at right. 7 Letter words get 50 point bonus. "Blank" used as any letter have no point value. All the words are in the Official SCRABBLE players Dictionary, 4th Edition.

Bridge

South dealer
N-S vulnerable

NORTH

♠ Q J 5
♥ 7 6 4
♦ 10 8 2
♣ Q J 8 3

WEST

♠ None
♥ A Q J 10 5 3 2
♦ Q 7 5 4
♣ 6 4

EAST

♠ 10 8 4 3
♥ K 9 8
♦ 6
♣ A 10 9 7 2

SOUTH

♠ A K 9 7 6 2
♥ None
♦ A K J 9 3
♣ K 5

South 2 ♣
West 3 ♥
North Pass
East 4 ♥

Pass Pass 5 ♠ All Pass

Opening lead – ♠ A

©2026 Tribune Content Agency, LLC

Word Force

DRUMBEAT

From the word or phrase above, form **AT LEAST 21** five-letter words, without using more than one form of the same word. For example, drink or drank (not both).

ANSWERS IN TOMORROW'S POST
Yesterday's word:
CLIPBOARD

acrid board carol podia
braid cobra polar
broad coral rabid
broil labor radio
carob parol rapid

Wonderword

How to play: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **Circle their letters only. Do not circle the word.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

CONFERENCES AROUND THE WORLD Solution: 10 letters

P H A R M A C Y S L A U N N A
S R W F O C U S E A L E R T I
Y E O A A T A D M S S E R P D
C H C F O R U M I V E N U E E
H A E U E N F S N E L A W S M
O B R A R S O I A G N H I U A
L I E E L I S I R A H C N M T
O L R R E T T I T S G O E M H
G I A A K R H Y O A T V S I E
Y T W N R A M C O N N E C T M
G A T I O V A T A P A R H A A
R T F B W E E O N R L L A L T
E I O E T L T N E V E A T K I
N O S W E N O I T N E V N O C
E N G I N E E R I N G O A L S

©2026 Andrews McMeel Syndication www.wonderword.com 8/18

Alert, Annual, Audience, Career, Chat, Connect, Convention, Cover, Data, Energy, Engineering, Event, First, Focus, Forum, Goals, Healthcare, Host, Las Vegas, Laws, Mathematics, Media, Nation, Network, Pharmacy, Plan, Press, Professional, Psychology, Rehabilitation, Security, Seminar, Software, Summit, Talk, Team, Travel, Venue, Webinar

Yesterday's Answer: Musician

For WONDERWORD apps, books & more, visit Wonderword.com, or call 1-855-232-2367.

POST SUDOKU

To solve a Su Doku, you must put a number from 1 to 9, in each empty box.

Each number must appear once in each horizontal row, as well as in each vertical column and in each of the 3-by-3 grids.

Impossible? Not once you get the hang of it.

Tips and in depth strategies at

www.SudokuWiki.org

PLAY MORE GAMES!

NYPOST.COM/GAMES

Solutions on Page 37

© Syndicated Puzzles

Very Easy #7,374

Difficult #7,164

Quick Crossword

Across
1 Ed of "Lou Grant"
6 Flower holder
10 Baseball officials
14 Stir up
15 Bar mitzvah dance
16 Bean fermented to make miso
17 *Be a little nosy
19 a living
20 Yale student
21 Song for two
22 Apple Music predecessor
24 Whys and wherefores
26 Invitation letters
27 Toward the stern
28 Store
29 Acai bowl grain
32 *Music, dance, drama, and the like
36 Penne __ vodka
37 + or - atomic particle
38 Self-referential
39 *Squeeze-box instrument with a keyboard
44 " __ Hur"
45 Move like a spooked horse, maybe
46 McKellen of "X-Men"
47 Alien-hunting subj.
48 Royalties, e.g.
52 Deli order
55 Ultrasoft mineral
56 More, on a music score
57 "Growing Pains" actor Thicke
58 *Public relations manager
61 Suppressed, with "up"
62 Toward sunrise
63 Ore finder
64 On a trawler, say
65 Gains after taxes
66 Bamboo-loving bear, or, when parsed in three parts, a feature of the answers to the starred clues

Down
1 According to
2 Took without asking
3 Big name in brick phones
4 __ out a living
5 List, as names during roll call
6 Footwear
7 Sell aggressively
8 Directional suffix
9 Wisconsin's capital
10 Drain completely
11 Kvetch
12 Funeral pile

13 Comic __: informal typeface
18 Reach a cost of
23 Rating for many shows aired at 8 p.m.
25 Plastic wrap brand
26 Big horned animal
28 Recommended garment when using glitter glue
29 Double Stuf cookie
30 Env. directive
31 Bag-screening org.
32 Part of a glissade, in ballet
33 Dynamism
34 Christina who played Wednesday Addams and appeared on "Wednesday"
35 __ acid
36 PD alert
40 Listen to
41 Signature replicator
42 Iranian currency
43 Summer childcare option
47 Christmas cookie receiver
48 Histories
49 Philly Ivy League sch.
50 Like a fork
51 "Kama __"

CARDS HERE SOSA
ACCRA OMAN OWLS
PLAYGROUND BIAS
SLEEP SENSE
AARP FLASHLIGHT
SHEET AFLOAT
PEELER TOLL HOE
CALLLOO BLOWOFF
ADS LUIS AMALFI
EAGLES STEEL
DOUBLEDATED EYRE
UNTIL AMOR
ERIK BACKTOWBACK
LYLE OGRE ZELDA
SEES TOYS EDICT

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER
(C) 2026 Tribune Media Services
52 West Coast wine region
53 Fútbol cheers
54 Locks on a mustang
55 Exam
59 "Insecure" star Issa
60 Supermodel Carangi

BUSINESS BRIEFS

China slowing

China's economic momentum slowed broadly in July, weighed down by muted consumer spending and slumping investment. Retail sales rose 0.6% in July from a year ago, while property investment fell 19% and urban unemployment rose to 5.2%.

Tesla cab near

Tesla has told employees it is gearing up for a public launch of Cybercab, starting with a rollout in Austin, Texas, as soon as this month, The Information reported.

IPO revived

Investment firm General Atlantic tapped JPMorgan Chase to lead its initial public offering, reviving listing plans that had been stalled for nearly three years. The IPO could take place as soon as this year.

Big AI leap

Anthropic's annual revenue run rate topped \$65 billion by the end of July, underscoring the Claude creator's rapid growth. The key metric was up from \$47 billion in May and \$9 billion at the end of 2025.

Nike in last

Nike stock fell 4% to \$39.09, its lowest closing price since 2014, pushing the athletic apparel retailer to last place in the Dow Jones Industrial Average.

Sources: Reuters, Dow Jones, AP

MAJOR DAMAGE

Meta staring at huge hit if loses to state AGs

By THOMAS BARRABI

Mark Zuckerberg's Meta faces the possibility of paying "astronomical" damages as opening arguments in the landmark trial accusing the tech giant of fueling a teen mental health crisis get underway in California federal court Tuesday.

The Instagram parent claims it could face \$1.4 trillion in damages — nearly the size of its entire market cap — based on how a coalition of state attorneys general argue that penalties should be calculated. The states say a more realistic figure if Meta loses the case would be a still-unprecedented \$200 billion in damages.

Nonetheless, New Mexico Attorney General Raul Torrez, who recently won a \$567 million judgment against Meta in a separate state trial that made similar claims, said Wall Street is underestimating the possibility of a major court loss for Zuckerberg in his home state of California.

"You could wake up with a headline judgment that is, as I've said, astronomical," Torrez told CNBC in an interview published Monday.

Used kids' data

Meta is defending against a coalition of 29 state attorneys general who claim that Meta illegally collected and used kids' data in a case first brought in 2023. The states further allege that Meta designed Facebook and Instagram to be addictive for teens through features such as the "like" button and recommendation algorithms, which caused a wave of anxiety, depression, self-harm and even suicide.

The AGs of California, Colorado, Kentucky and New Jersey also allege that Meta misled the public about safety risks associated with its apps.

Big, big numbers

Meta, led by Mark Zuckerberg (below), is warning it could face a \$1.4 trillion judgment if it loses a federal trial brought by 29 state attorneys general over its use of data from kids.



"You could wake up with a headline judgment that is, as I've said, astronomical."

— New Mexico AG Raúl Torrez (above)

"Meta designed a dangerous product for young users, knew it to be dangerous, and then lied to children, families, and the community about how dangerous it was," California AG Rob Bonta said in a statement last week. "We are ready to hold Meta accountable for its role in fueling the mental health crisis of American children and look forward to trial. It seems Meta very much does not."

While a jury will hear arguments and render an advisory verdict in the case, it will be up to District Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers to make a final decision on specific damages and potential changes to how Meta does business.

Aside from financial penalties, the state AGs want to force Meta to delete any illegally harvested data from kids under age 13 and stop using algorithms trained on that data. They also want a court order barring Meta from using "certain addictive design feature[s]" including infinite scroll and autoplay features.

Both Zuckerberg and Instagram chief Adam Mosseri could both be called to the witness stand.

Attorneys for Meta, which has strenuously denied wrongdoing, will argue that the state AGs are seeking damages that go far beyond the actual scope of their case — and that they have pro-

vided no evidence that the company's apps cause real-world harm.

"The AGs offer no proof anyone in their states was misled, claim benign features like having an additional Instagram account somehow harmed their residents, and attempt to penalize Meta for industry-wide challenges like age verification," a Meta spokesperson said in a statement.

Aside from its loss in New Mexico, Meta and Google were ordered to pay a combined \$6 million in damages after being held liable in California state court for fueling social media addiction for a 20-year-old woman known as "KGM."

AP (2)

Oil's not well as US stocks take dip

US stocks edged further from their record heights Monday after rising oil prices cranked up the pressure on inflation and financial markets.

The S&P 500 fell 0.5% but remains near its all-time high set Thursday. The

Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 272 points, or 0.5%, and the Nasdaq slipped 0.3%.

Wall Street's losses solidified in the afternoon when oil prices accelerated upward. The price for a barrel of Brent crude, the interna-

tional standard, rose 2.7% to \$90.87.

It's been careening back and forth because of uncertainty about what the war with Iran will do to the global flow of crude.

Bonds remained under pressure Monday, with the

30-year Treasury yield hitting a 19-year high of 5.31%.

Investors are looking ahead to a busy week of retail earnings and minutes from the latest Fed meeting.

"Concerns about recent softer data have the market being a bit tepid and wait-

ing for retail earnings for direction," said Phil Blencato, chief market strategist at Osaic Wealth, who added that volume is often weak in August. "There's a combination of summer doldrums and waiting for data on the consumer." Wires

Follow us on



@NYPOSTBIZ

Paramount wants \$1.9B bond

Paramount on Monday asked a judge to require 12 states and the Writers Guild of America to put up a nearly \$1.9 billion bond for challenging its acquisition of Warner Bros. Discovery, money that would go to the company if it ultimately wins the case.

The aggressive maneuver came in a motion arguing that the plaintiffs should be held financially responsible for damages Paramount suffers during litigation seeking to

block the \$81 billion deal.

Paramount, headed by CEO David Ellison (right), specifically wants the bond to cover the roughly \$7 million-a-day, or \$650 million-a-quarter, ticking fee it will owe Warner shareholders if the deal hasn't closed by Oct. 1.

The ticking fee was an incentive to persuade Warner shareholders to support its bid over Netflix.

A trial is scheduled to start in March 2027, much later than Para-

mount sought.

"Paramount will have incurred \$1.3 billion in unrecoverable financial losses as a result of ticking fees by the time post-trial briefing concludes, to say nothing of incremental financing fees and delayed synergies," the motion said.

California Attorney General Rob Bonta, who is leading the states' case, didn't respond for comment. *Dow Jones*



Uber taps drone co. to deliver

Uber is teaming with drone startup Zipline to take its delivery service to the skies, a move aimed at winning customers demanding ever-quicker turnaround times for takeout, grocery and retail orders.

The desire for rapid delivery is "insatiable," Uber's Chief Executive Dara Khosrowshahi said. "It doesn't seem like it's ending."

Under the partnership, Uber Eats will start deliveries with Zipline's drone network in Dallas and Houston by the end of the year.

The companies plan to expand the offering across the US as Zipline grows its footprint, targeting 1 million Uber Eats deliveries via drone a day by the end of 2029. Uber is also investing an undisclosed amount in Zipline, the companies said.

With Zipline's drones, Uber expects to fulfill orders in five to 10 minutes, slashing its typical delivery times of around 30 minutes, while extending the range of its service beyond urban and suburban areas.

"Truly quick commerce is proving to be an even bigger market than the original food market was," Khosrowshahi said. "We think this can be an enormous tailwind for the next leg of growth for Eats."

Zipline said its speedy turnaround times tend to get customers ordering out more frequently. *Dow Jones*

'Copycat' on hot seat

The Nation puts axed 'plagiarist' under review

By ALEXANDRA STEIGRAD

The Nation is reviewing work by lefty columnist Ross Barkan after he was axed by New York magazine on Friday for ripping off other authors' work dozens of times.

In a statement that notably lacked contrition, the Mayor Mamdani-loving author previously downplayed the plagiarism and boasted he was starting "a new column for The Nation," adding he would take "a more considered pace."

But a Nation rep told The Post on Monday there are no plans for him to start a column — and the mag is reviewing stories he's written for the publication since 2019.

"We are conducting an internal review in the wake of New York's announcement," the spokesperson said, clarifying that Barkan "is not under contract to write a column for



After New York magazine sacked lefty columnist Ross Barkan — citing many instances of ripping off other authors' work — his contributions to The Nation are now being reviewed by that publication.

The Nation."

The writer didn't respond for comment.

The Post reached out to several outlets where Barkan has contributed — including The New York Times, The Atlantic and

The Guardian — to ask if they are reviewing his work.

The New York magazine probe was sparked when a Washington Post reporter noticed striking similarities between the lead of

one of his stories and the lead Barkan wrote about the same subject in May.

As NPR unearthed additional plagiarism allegations — drawing an angry denial from Barkan — New York magazine

launched its review.

At the end of the four-month process, New York said it was parting ways with Barkan.

New York said it found 67 of his columns "that did not include proper attribution of language, information and/or sourcing."

The publication said it was updating those pieces with proper attribution and is "committed to addressing any other instances that come to light."

The prolific Barkan appeared to blame the plagiarism on working at a frantic pace.

"In the course of nearly 250 pieces, there were times I should have been more careful with my citation," he said Friday.

"I'm sorry about these errors and will work to do better, more careful work in the future," he added. "I am, at a more considered pace, writing a new column for The Nation."

Big recall saps Stellantis JetBlue slips on oil costs

Stellantis shares hit a 13-year low Monday after the struggling maker of Jeep and Chrysler said it is recalling nearly a million vehicles worldwide because of potentially faulty rear-view cameras.

Radio software in the vehicles may prevent the cameras from appearing, the company said. It said it plans to fix the problem with an over-the-air update and is unaware of any accidents or injuries.

US-traded shares fell more than 4% to \$5.12. The stock is down nearly 50% from a year ago.

Most of the 955,000 vehicles involved in Monday's recall involved Chrysler, Dodge and Jeep models in the US, the company said.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has mandated rear-view cameras for all light-duty vehicles since 2018.

Dow Jones

Shares of JetBlue tumbled more than 7% Monday following an analyst's downgrade that highlighted the outsize impact on the airline from the expiration of the 60-day Iran cease-fire.

Seaport Research Partners senior analyst Daniel McKenzie said jet fuel volatility is especially challenging for JetBlue, whose debt load is tied to several factors, including prepayments for its failed merger

with Spirit Airlines

"If oil spikes from increased hostilities with Iran and JBLU is forced to boost debt to fund losses, its balance sheet could become too indebted and shares could ultimately become worthless," he wrote.

On Friday, activist investor Carl Icahn disclosed that he had unloaded 13 million shares of the airline, about a third of his prior holdings, in the second quarter. *Dow Jones*

Disclosures lift SpaceX

SpaceX shares rose 4.4% Monday after a flurry of securities filings revealed the depth of institutional and tech-industry investment in Elon Musk's company

Chip giant Nvidia disclosed it owned close to 123 million SpaceX shares, with Alphabet's Google holding a 7.2% stake. Harvard University's endowment fund disclosed a \$2.2 billion stake.

Entities of close Musk associate Antonio Gracias held a 6.5% stake. Musk himself controlled a 48.4% ownership stake. *Dow Jones*



CHRISTOPHER KUBASIK
Canned for 'conduct.'

Prez jet fixer on the outs

L3Harris Technologies LHX, the company that overhauled a Qatari plane now used as Air Force One, replaced Christopher Kubasik as chairman and CEO after an investigation determined he violated the defense contractor's code of conduct.

Kubasik's alleged conduct didn't involve and has no impact on the Melbourne, Fla., company's financial reporting, controls, customer relationships or operational performance, L3Harris said Monday.

The company didn't disclose further details about the investigation, while Kubasik didn't respond for comment.

L3Harris named executive Sam Mehta as CEO, effective immediately.

Shares slipped 4.6% Monday.

More than a decade ago, Kubasik was fired as chief operating officer of Lockheed Martin after acknowledging an improper relationship with a subordinate, months before he was due to become chief executive officer.

Wires

Strikes kill steel labor

Steelmaker ArcelorMittal said two employees were killed in a missile strike on a site in Ukraine over the weekend, and others were injured.

One member of staff and one contractor were killed, while 13 other people were injured, the Luxembourg-based company said.

Production processes were partially halted after the facilities were damaged.

Dow Jones

Electric horse



Ferrari CEO Benedetto Vigna (right) said orders for its first EV, the Luce (above), were "in line" with projections. The first Luce was just sold at auction for \$40 million, a record for a new car.

Getty Images

Luce-rative sum for 1st Ferrari EV

By ARIEL ZILBER

Ferrari's first electric car fetched a staggering \$40 million at a charity auction — shattering expectations after the radical new model was savaged by critics who said it betrayed the legendary Italian automaker's identity.

The eye-popping sale set a record for a new vehicle sold at auction, according to Ferrari — and came less than three months after the five-seater priced at \$550,000 sparked a fierce backlash upon its unveiling.

The Luce — Ferrari's first fully electric production car — was developed with LoveFrom, the design firm founded by former Apple design chief Jony Ive and Marc Newson.

Critics blasted the battery-powered Ferrari's unconventional exterior and questioned whether the four-door grand tourer looked or felt like a Ferrari.

The backlash was severe enough to rattle investors.

Former Ferrari Chairman Luca di Montezemolo joined the pile-on, saying he hoped the company would remove its iconic prancing-horse badge from the vehicle.

Surprised

Ferrari later conceded that the intensity of the response caught the company off guard.

Global Marketing Director Emanuele Carando said the automaker anticipated a polarizing reaction but "didn't expect such a magnitude" of negativity.

Ferrari product chief Gianmaria Fulgenzi separately said the Luce "needs to be digested."

Yet the auction showed that the controversy did little to deter at least one buyer from paying an extraordinary premium for the first production chassis.

According to The Autopian, bidding began at about \$1 million and quickly surged into eight figures before eventually reaching \$40 million. The buyer wasn't named.

Ferrari said all proceeds from the sale will go toward educational initiatives, via the Ferrari Foundation.

The charity car was created through Ferrari's Tailor Made customization operation, with a pearlescent exterior developed to change appearance as lighting and viewing angles shift.

Despite the hostile reaction that followed the Luce's unveiling, Ferrari has said demand for the controversial EV is meeting its projections.

CEO Benedetto Vigna said in late July that orders were "in line with our expectations" and coming from both existing Ferrari clients and first-time customers.

BIG BIZ POLICY PROBE

Insure-credit links

By ARIEL ZILBER

The federal probe into Lakers owner Mark Walter's business empire is raising broader questions about a Wall Street playbook that uses insurance capital to invest in private credit and other alternative assets — a model that later spread across some of the biggest firms in finance.

Federal prosecutors and the Securities and Exchange Commission are examining whether Walter or his companies committed fraud by failing to disclose financial ties while borrowing billions from insurers he controls, according to The Wall Street Journal.

Walter, who is CEO of Guggenheim Partners and owns the Los Angeles Dodgers and Lakers, has not been accused of any crimes — nor have his businesses.

Investigators have focused on four firms that served as intermediaries between Walter-controlled insurers and other businesses linked to his empire, the Journal reported, citing sources.

The scrutiny could have implications well beyond Walter's own companies.

The billionaire was an early adopter of a strategy that paired insurance companies — and their vast pools of long-term policyholder capital — with investments in private and il-

liquid assets, according to the Financial Times.

After the 2008 financial crisis, Walter pushed Guggenheim into buying insurers at bargain prices and deploying billions tied to policyholder obligations into assets offering the prospect of higher returns, the FT reported.

Explaining scrutiny

Wall Street giants Apollo, KKR and Brookfield later built large insurance operations of their own, using those balance sheets to finance private-credit investments. Private capital firms now manage more than \$1 trillion in insurance assets, according to the FT.

That helps explain why Walter's troubles are drawing broader attention as regulators increasingly scrutinize private credit, which has grown into a major source of financing outside traditional banks.

In June, two insurers owned by Walter under TWG disclosed that they had failed to identify more than \$20 billion in related-party assets, according to the FT.

"We have always acted in good faith, and insinuations that we have in any way attempted to circumvent our obligations is simply false," a TWG spokesman told the Journal.

azilber@nypost.com

Feds probe Andreessen

The Justice Department is investigating Andreessen Horowitz over concerns that the venture-capital firm's partners may be improperly sitting on the boards of competing AI companies, Bloomberg News reported Monday.

The companies involved include Databricks and Fivetran, which are backed by the firm, Bloomberg said. Andreessen Horowitz, one of the most politically active investors in the AI sector, didn't respond for comment.

Reuters

NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICES

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

In re: AGORIANI INC., Case No. 25-12287 (LGB)
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE, that the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York entered an order approving bidding and auction procedures for the sale by Agoriani Inc d/b/a Ray's Pizza (the "Debtor"), the debtor and debtor-in-possession in the above captioned case, of substantially all of the assets and personal property of the Debtor for the sum of \$104,000 subject to higher and better offers. The Debtor's assets consist of the contents of a pizza and bagel restaurant located at 2 Saint Marks Place, New York, New York. The Debtor does not have a current lease – any purchaser wishing to remain at the premises will need to negotiate a new lease with the landlord. PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the following dates and times shall apply with respect to the Bidding Procedures: Bid Qualification Deadline: August 24, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. (ET), Auction: August 25, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. (ET), Sale Hearing: September 1, 2026 at 10: 00 a.m. Sale Closing: 14 days after entry of sale approval order. PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE THAT parties wishing to bid on the assets should contact MORRISON TENENBAUM PLLC, Lawrence F. Morrison, Esq., Brian J. Hufnagel, Esq., 87 Walker Street, Floor 2, New York, New York 10013, (212) 620-0936x1002 for further information.

- CAREERS
- CAREER TRAINING
- BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES
- FINANCIAL SERVICES
- REAL ESTATE SERVICES
- MERCHANDISE FOR SALE
- PETS
- AUTOMOTIVE
- LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICE

PLACE AN AD
Email: cloyd@nypost.com

DEADLINES
Monday: Friday 2:30PM
Mon @Work: Friday 2:30PM
Tuesday: Monday 2:30PM
Wednesday: Tuesday 2:30PM
Thursday: Wednesday 2:30PM
Friday: Thursday 2:30PM
Saturday: Friday 2:30PM
Sunday: Friday 2:30PM

PAYMENTS
We Accept
Visa, Mastercard,
American Express,
checks and money orders

The New York Post reserves the right to edit, reclassify, reject or cancel an ad at any time. We can only give appropriate credit, not to exceed the cost of the ad, for one insertion. We are not liable for complete omissions. Any discrepancies must be brought to our attention within 30 days of the first day the ad runs, in order to receive consideration for credit.

EMPLOYMENT

PROFESSIONAL

Santander US Capital Markets LLC (NY, NY) seeks Executive Director, USA CIB Finance – Product Control. Reqs Bach in Ops Rsrch Anlys, DataSci, Comp Engg or Finance Tchnlgy +5yrs prgrsv post-Bach exp in offrd pos or Exec Director, VP, Executn Mngr or Sr Mngr in bankng/finance sector. All reqd exp mustv incld leading prjcts acrss mult fincl mrkts incl US, LatAm (Brazil, Mexico Colombia) & Europe, applying knwldg of front-to-back mrkt prdcts incl Credit, Rates, FX & Securities Finance & applicble regnl rgltry & opratnl frmewrks. At lst 1yr of reqd exp mustv incld divrng data-divn solns & autom'n supptng Prdct Cntrl & P&L processes (incl daily P&L prdctn, P&L explain/attrbutn, valuatin cntrl & reconciliatns); implmting anlytics & statstcl tchnqs (incl forecastng algrthms & classfcn tchnqs) to suppt opratnl & fincl decsn-makng; using Qlik, Tableau & PowerBI to dlvr insights acrss fincl & opratnl domains; using data modlmg & DB tchnlgs incl Impala, Oracle & Snowflake to suppt entreprse-level data archtctr, anlytics & rptng; programmg in Python; & supptng front-to-back trade lifecycle mgmt & cntrls using Murex, Calypso, Bimbrg, CTM & CLS. #LI-DNI. Salary: \$250,000-\$330,000/yr. Email res to Christianne.Harpster@santander.us. Ref #15.

MERCHANDISE

COLLECTIBLES

BUYING BASEBALL CARDS
And All Other Sports Cards,
Cert. Memorabilia & Graded
Vintage Cards. Prefer Pre-1980
Paying Top Dollar \$\$\$
small or large collections
Call Henry 917-273-2353

Want it sold?
Sell it in the
NEW YORK POST
Classifieds
Email cloyd@nypost.com

Classifieds

By ERIC OLSON

Ohio State and Oregon were 1-2 in The Associated Press Top 25 released Monday, giving the Big Ten Conference the top two teams in the pre-season rankings for the first time in 65 years and just the second time ever.

The Buckeyes received 40 first-place votes and Oregon received 14 in voting by 69 media members who cover college football.

Ohio State will go into a season No. 1 for the ninth time, and first since 2015. The Buckeyes are now tied with Alabama for second-most preseason No. 1 rankings behind Oklahoma's 10.

Oregon has its highest pre-season ranking in program history after having opened No. 3 four times.

Georgia, Notre Dame and Texas round out the top five. Defending national champion Indiana starts at No. 6 and is followed by Miami, Texas A&M, Mississippi and Oklahoma.

Notre Dame received six first-place votes, Indiana got eight and Miami one.

This is the first year a conference has held down the top two spots in the preseason poll since Oklahoma and Nebraska of the Big Eight were 1-2 in 1987.

The last time the Big Ten had the Nos. 1 and 2 teams in the preseason was 1961, when Iowa and Ohio State topped the poll. The Hawkeyes lost four of their last five games after a 4-0 start and finished that season unranked. The Buckeyes went 8-0-1 and ended the season No. 2 behind unbeaten Alabama.

The Big Ten has won three straight College Football Playoff championships (Michigan, Ohio State, Indiana) and will be going for an unprecedented fourth straight national title. This is the fourth consecutive year the Big Ten has had two of the top three teams in the preseason rankings.

The Southeastern Conference leads all conferences with nine teams in the presea-

Ohio State ranked No. 1 in preseason AP Top 25



JUST SAYIN: Quarterback Julian Sayin, a 2025 Heisman Trophy finalist as a redshirt freshman, and the Buckeyes enter the season with a target on their back as the top-ranked team in the country.

Imagn Images

son Top 25, marking the third straight year it has had at least that many. Five of the top 10 teams are from the SEC for the first time since 2013.

Four Big 12 teams are ranked, with conference champion Texas Tech the highest at No. 12. The Atlantic Coast Conference has three ranked teams, with the Hurricanes joined by No. 19 SMU and No. 24 Louisville. There are no Group of Six schools in the Top 25.

Top-ranked Buckeyes

The offense is loaded. Heisman Trophy finalist Julian Sayin was the most accurate passer in the nation by a wide margin last season, Jeremiah Smith leads the nation in receiving yards and receiving touchdowns over the last two years and Bo Jackson is coming off a 1,000-yard rushing season as a freshman.

There is little concern about the defense even though eight

AP Top 25 poll

SCHOOL	2025 REC.
1. Ohio State (40)	12-2
2. Oregon (14)	13-2
3. Georgia	12-2
4. Notre Dame (6)	10-2
5. Texas	10-3
6. Indiana (8)	16-0
7. Miami (1)	13-3
8. Texas A&M	11-2
9. Ole Miss	13-2
10. Oklahoma	10-3
11. LSU	7-6
12. Texas Tech	12-2
13. Alabama	11-4
14. BYU	12-2
14. Southern Cal	9-4
16. Michigan	9-4
17. Washington	9-4
18. Penn State	7-6
19. SMU	9-4
20. Tennessee	8-5
21. Utah	11-2
22. Iowa	9-4
23. Houston	10-3
24. Louisville	9-4
25. Missouri	8-5

Others receiving votes:
Clemson 112, Florida 51,
Boise State 43, Arizona 32,
TCU 11, Navy 10, South
Carolina 10

starters must be replaced for a second straight year. At least six transfers are projected to start or play major roles.

Ohio State will get tested early and often. The Buckeyes visit Texas on Sept. 12 and five of their nine conference games are against preseason ranked teams, including at Indiana and against Oregon at home.

The Buckeyes have ended a season No. 1 in the AP poll six times (1942, 1954, 1968, 2002, 2014, 2024). — AP

LIV cancels team championship tourney

By MICHAEL BLINN

LIV Golf's season is officially ending early.

The rebel tour announced Monday that its team championship event, slated for the end of August in Michigan, is canceled.

Instead, the tournament scheduled for Aug. 20-23 at The Club at Chatham Hills in Indianapolis will serve to crown LIV's individual and team champs.

"By concluding the season now, we can put our full resources behind what comes

next and maintain the operational rigor this transition demands," CEO Scott O'Neil said in a statement.

The move confirms what has been rumored for weeks, with the \$40 million Michigan event at The Cardinal at Saint John's Resort in peril for nearly a month.

It comes after the tour canceled a New Orleans event in June.

LIV has been searching for new financial backing with the Saudi Arabian PIF set to pull the plug on its \$5 billion worth of funding at the end of the league season.

O'Neil, reportedly seeking \$300 million to \$350 million to keep LIV Golf going, announced earlier this month that he found investors, though it is not clear who they are.

It's enough to give O'Neil optimism about the future — 2027 and beyond.

"And '28 and '29 and '30," he said.

The Indianapolis event will see Jon Rahm win his third straight individual title, while the likes of Bryson DeChambeau, Joaquin Niemann, Lucas Herbert and Tyrrell Hatton play for second and third place.

Tsai not happy with Knicks as champions

By JOSEPH STASZEWSKI

Count Joe Tsai among the few in New York City who are less than thrilled by the Knicks ending their 53-year NBA championship drought.

That's because the city's most beloved basketball franchise hoisted the Larry O'Brien Trophy before the Nets owner and his team could get their hands on it for the first time — despite the franchise's best efforts.

Tsai, who has fully owned the Nets since 2019, was asked about the Knicks winning it all by Nets Daily and if it would change his approach to jump-starting the Nets.

"Every year, some team is going to win a championship," Tsai said. "So it happens that this year that team is in the same city. It doesn't make us feel very good. It irates our fanbase, and it is embarrassing, but in business or in competition, in sports, or in anything, you shouldn't let the embarrassment factor affect how you perform. [We] had a plan and we're rebuilding, and I think right now we are on a positive trajectory. So it doesn't change my thinking at all."

Tsai took a big swing at bringing a championship to Brooklyn by signing Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving in free agency in the summer of 2019 and trading for James Harden in January 2021 to form their version of the Big 3.

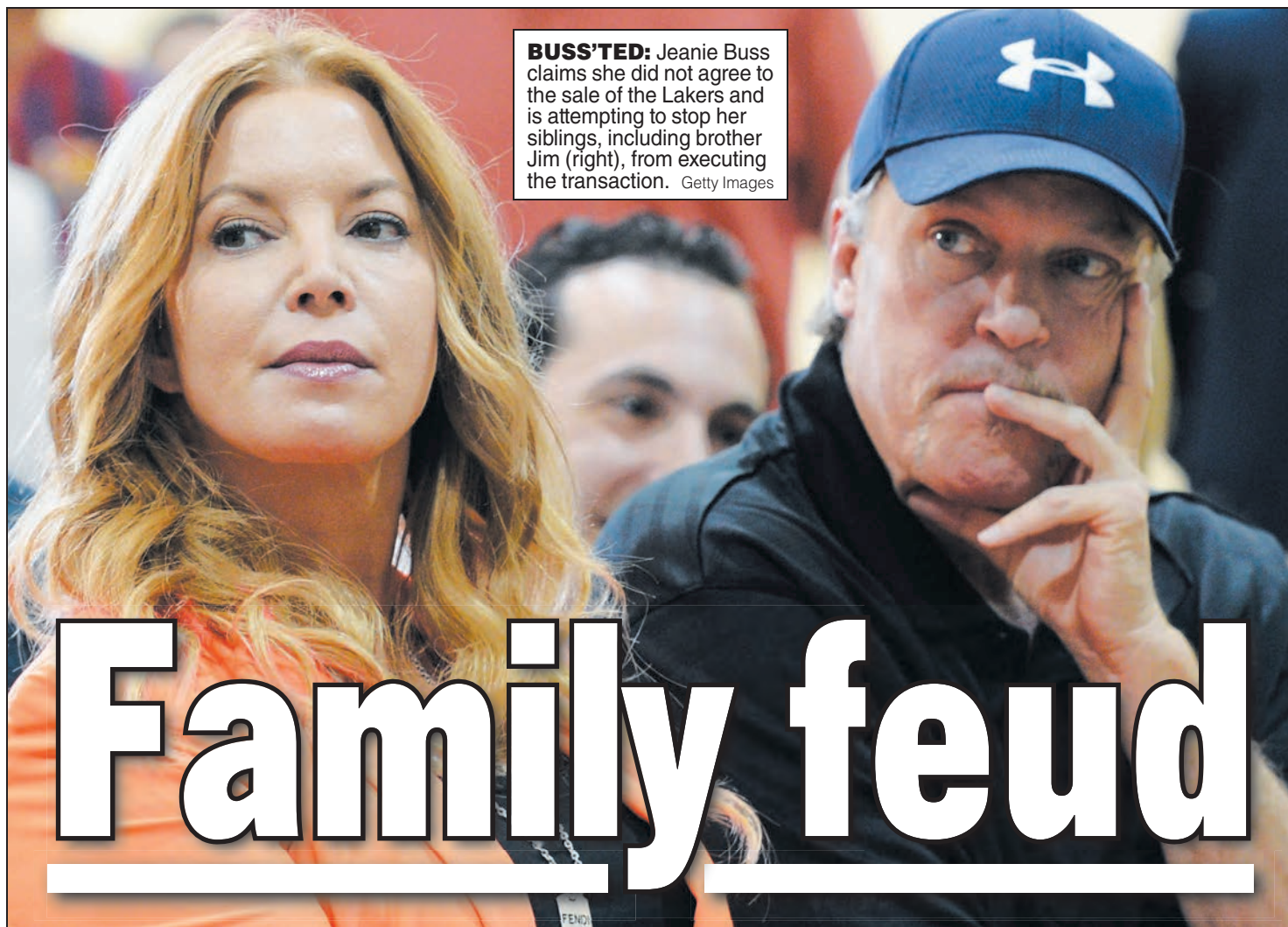
Injuries kept the trio from consistently playing together, and the closest the group ever came to a championship was a heart-breaking Eastern Conference semifinals loss to the Bucks in 2021.

Two straight first-round exits followed, and the franchise has found itself between rebuilding and tanking since the 2023-24 season, winning just 46 games combined the past two campaigns while stockpiling talented young players in the draft.

While the Nets were tanking, the Knicks became one of the NBA's most consistent winners behind captain Jalen Brunson, culminating in a historic playoff run.

The Nets, however, appear to be finally turning the corner and prioritizing winning under head coach Jordi Fernández after signing ex-Knicks Julius Randle in free agency to pair with Michael Porter Jr. as leaders of a young core.

jstaszewski@nypost.com



BUSS'TED: Jeanie Buss claims she did not agree to the sale of the Lakers and is attempting to stop her siblings, including brother Jim (right), from executing the transaction. Getty Images

Family feud

By KHOBI PRICE

Jeanie Buss is opposing the reported sale of her family's stake in the Lakers to Bob Iger and Joshua Kushner, arguing her siblings can't legally execute a sale without her approval.

In a letter obtained by The Post addressed to the lawyers representing her five other siblings in the Buss family trust (Jim, Johnny, Janie, Joey and Jesse), Jeanie Buss' lawyer, Adam Streisand, stated Jeanie didn't agree to sell the team and that any vote of the Buss family selling would be "Void ab initio."

She also filed paperwork to stop the sale with the Superior Court of Los Angeles Central District.

"No sale of the JAB Trust's 17.8% ownership interest in the Los Angeles Lakers, Inc. can be effectuated without approval by the current co-trustees, i.e., Jeanie, Janie and Joey Buss," Streisand said in the letter.

"Pursuant to the JAB Trust and the attached Court Order, the co-trustees are bound to vote the Los Angeles Lakers, Inc. shares to ensure that the minimum 15% ownership requirement is maintained in order to ensure that Jeanie Buss may remain Controlling Owner. Any attempt by the co-trustees to do otherwise, and any attempt to aid or abet the co-trustees as such, would constitute a breach of trust, breach of fiduciary duty and be in

Jeanie Buss says siblings can't sell Lakers; sale is 'void'

contempt of court."

The letter added: "On behalf of Jeanie Buss, I demand that your clients make clear publicly that Jeanie Buss is the Controlling Owner of the Los Angeles Lakers and that your clients shall take no action on this supposed 'vote' to sell the 17.8% stake."

Mark Walter, who purchased the majority ownership of the Lakers from the Buss family last year for a valuation of \$10 billion (which was a record for the sale of a U.S. sports franchise at the time), last week agreed to sell his stakes in the Lakers to Iger and Kushner at a historic valuation of \$12.5 billion.

ESPN first reported Monday that the Buss siblings voted to sell the family's remaining 17.8 percent ownership of the Lakers to Iger and Kushner.

The Buss family said in a statement: "We have decided as a family to sell the remaining Buss Family Trust shares to the Bob Iger group as part of the ongoing transaction. We love the Lakers, Laker fans and

will continue to support Los Angeles; but it is time to use this opportunity to move on and exit gracefully while we still can."

The Buss family trust, which includes six of Jerry Buss' children — Johnny (69), Jim (66), Jeanie (64), Janie (62), Joey (41) and Jesse (37) — needed a majority vote (four out of six) to allow the trustees to sell the family's shares.

ESPN reported Jeanie didn't vote to sell the family's ownership stake in the Lakers, while the other five siblings in the trust did.

Selling the Lakers would result in Jeanie no longer being the team's governor, since she would no longer have the qualifying 15 percent ownership stake in the franchise required to hold that position. She has been the team's governor since 2013 after Jerry's death.

When Walter purchased the majority ownership of the Lakers from the Buss family, the league announced that Buss would remain the team's governor for a period of at least five years (through 2030).

Iger told The Post last week he and Kushner intended to honor the agreement made between Walter and Buss.

But Monday, Jeanie's attorney sent a letter to lawyers for the other siblings demanding that they retract the announcement of the proposed sale, insisting that rules of the family trust and a 2017 court ruling make clear that she will remain a controlling owner of the team for life.

The letter also called the announcement of a planned sale of the family's stake in the Lakers "just the latest instance of a years-long pattern whereby Joey and Jesse Buss leak false, defamatory and pernicious 'information' ... for the malicious purpose of doing harm to the Los Angeles Lakers so long as Dr. [Jerry] Buss' chosen successor, Jeanie Buss, carries out her father's wishes."

Kushner and Iger are purchasing about 65 percent of the Lakers in their deal with Walter. The Buss family's share of the Lakers would give Kushner and Iger about 83 percent of the franchise.

That sale needs to be approved by the NBA Board of Governors, which is scheduled to meet Sept. 15-16 in New York.

Kushner also must sell his minority ownership stake in the Heat before he can officially become the Lakers' co-majority owner.

kprice@californiapost.com

AL Standings

East	W	L	Pct.	GB	*WGB	L10	Streak	Home	Away
Tampa Bay	75	49	.605	—	—	7-3	W-1	42-21	33-28
Yankees	69	55	.556	6	+8½	5-5	W-1	31-27	38-28
Boston	67	58	.536	8½	+6	3-7	W-1	30-31	37-27
Baltimore	61	64	.488	14½	—	5-5	L-1	32-30	29-34
Toronto	61	65	.484	15	½	7-3	L-1	33-33	28-32

Central	W	L	Pct.	GB	*WGB	L10	Streak	Home	Away
Chicago	65	59	.524	—	—	6-4	L-1	37-24	28-35
Detroit	61	64	.488	4½	—	5-5	W-1	32-31	29-33
Minnesota	61	65	.484	5	½	4-6	W-1	33-31	28-34
Cleveland	60	65	.480	5½	1	3-7	L-1	29-33	31-32
Kansas City	52	74	.413	14	9½	4-6	W-2	30-30	22-44

West	W	L	Pct.	GB	*WGB	L10	Streak	Home	Away
Houston	63	62	.504	—	—	4-6	L-2	31-31	32-31
Texas	61	64	.488	2	—	4-6	L-1	32-27	29-37
Seattle	59	66	.472	4	2	3-7	W-2	33-29	26-37
Athletics	49	76	.392	14	12	4-6	L-1	23-40	26-36
Los Angeles	49	76	.392	14	12	5-5	L-1	29-36	20-40

*WGB: Games behind third-place team in wild-card race

Monday

Tampa Bay 7, Baltimore 6
Boston 11, Arizona 1
Minnesota 4, Atlanta 2
Detroit 8, Pittsburgh 5
Kansas City 9, Athletics 5
Cubs 7, White Sox 5, 10 inn.

Tuesday

Yankees at Baltimore, 6:35

Detroit at Pittsburgh, 6:40
San Francisco at Cleveland, 6:40
Toronto at Tampa Bay, 6:40
Arizona at Boston, 7:10
Athletics at Kansas City, 7:40
Atlanta at Minnesota, 7:40
Seattle at Milwaukee, 7:40
White Sox at Cubs, 8:05
Washington at Texas, 8:05
L.A. Angels at Houston, 8:10

NL Standings

East	W	L	Pct.	GB	*WGB	L10	Streak	Home	Away
Atlanta	74	51	.592	—	—	4-6	L-1	42-23	32-28
Philadelphia	68	58	.540	6½	+1	6-4	W-4	33-30	35-28
Miami	64	62	.508	10½	3	6-4	L-1	38-25	26-37
Washington	60	66	.476	14½	7	4-6	L-3	27-36	33-30
Mets	57	69	.452	17½	10	7-3	W-4	29-34	28-35

Central	W	L	Pct.	GB	*WGB	L10	Streak	Home	Away
Milwaukee	77	48	.616	—	—	5-5	W-2	41-22	36-26
Chicago	73	53	.579	4½	+6	6-4	W-1	37-26	36-27
St. Louis	64	62	.508	13½	3	6-4	L-1	32-34	32-28
Pittsburgh	61	66	.480	17	6½	4-6	L-1	32-32	29-34
Cincinnati	60	65	.480	17	6½	4-6	W-1	31-34	29-31

West	W	L	Pct.	GB	*WGB	L10	Streak	Home	Away
Los Angeles	75	51	.595	—	—	6-5	W-1	37-26	38-25
San Diego	67	59	.532	7½	—	7-3	L-1	37-26	30-33
Arizona	66	60	.524	8½	1	5-5	L-2	36-27	30-33
San Francisco	51	73	.411	22½	15	3-7	L-1	29-33	22-40
Colorado	50	75	.400	24½	16½	5-5	W-1	27-33	23-42

*WGB: Games behind third-place team in wild-card race

Monday

Mets 2, San Diego 1
St. Louis 2, Cincinnati 1, 1st game
Cincinnati 6, St. Louis 5, 10 inn., 2nd game
Philadelphia 6, Miami 5
Boston 11, Arizona 1
Minnesota 4, Atlanta 2
Detroit 8, Pittsburgh 5
Cubs 7, White Sox 5, 10 inn.
L.A. Dodgers at Colorado, 8:40

Tuesday

San Diego at **Mets**, 7:10
Detroit at Pittsburgh, 6:40
Miami at Philadelphia, 6:40
San Francisco at Cleveland, 6:40
St. Louis at Cincinnati, 6:40
Arizona at Boston, 7:10
Atlanta at Minnesota, 7:40
Seattle at Milwaukee, 7:40
White Sox at Cubs, 8:05
Washington at Texas, 8:05
L.A. Dodgers at Colorado, 8:40



Puzzles on Page 32

1	8	5	3	9	6	4	7	2
9	2	4	1	8	7	6	5	3
3	6	7	5	4	2	1	8	9
7	5	3	8	6	1	2	9	4
8	1	9	4	2	3	7	6	5
6	4	2	7	5	9	8	3	1
2	9	8	6	1	5	3	4	7
4	3	1	9	7	8	5	2	6
5	7	6	2	3	4	9	1	8

Solution to Very Easy #7,374

2	9	7	8	4	6	5	3	1
8	5	3	2	1	9	7	4	6
6	1	4	5	7	3	9	8	2
5	3	1	6	2	8	4	9	7
7	2	9	4	3	5	1	6	8
4	8	6	7	9	1	2	5	3
1	7	5	3	8	4	6	2	9
9	4	8	1	6	2	3	7	5
3	6	2	9	5	7	8	1	4

Solution to Difficult #7,164

Mets 2, Padres 1

San Diego	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Tatis rf	3	0	0	1	0	1	.279
Cronenworth 2b	3	0	2	0	1	1	.227
Machado 3b	3	0	1	0	1	0	.212
France 1b	3	0	1	0	1	0	.292
Merrill cf	4	0	1	0	0	0	.244
Campusano c	3	0	0	0	1	0	.305
Sheets dh	3	1	1	0	0	1	.212
Bogaerts ss	3	0	0	0	1	1	.221
Rengifo lf	4	0	1	0	0	1	.245
Totals	29	1	7	1	5	5	

Mets	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Ewing lf	4	1	1	0	0	2	.249
Lindor ss	2	1	0	0	2	0	.243
Bichette 3b	3	0	1	1	0	0	.267
Benge rf	3	0	1	0	0	0	.273
Robert cf	2	0	0	1	0	0	.214
Young 1b	3	0	0	0	0	1	.267
Semien 2b	3	0	1	0	0	2	.210
Polanco dh	3	0	1	0	0	0	.148
Pache pr-dh	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000
Alvarez c	3	0	0	0	0	2	.246
Totals	26	2	5	2	2	7	

San Diego	010 000 000 — 1 7 0
Mets	200 000 00x — 2 5 0

LOB: San Diego 8, New York 3. **RBIs:** Tatis (57), Bichette (63), Robert (18). **CS:** Benge (4). **SF:** Tatis, Robert. **Runners left in scoring position:** San Diego 1 (Merrill); New York 2 (Lindor, Young). **RISP:** San Diego 3 for 5; New York 1 for 6. **Runners moved up:** Benge. **LIDP:** Bichette. **GIDP:** Tatis. **DP:** San Diego 1 (France); New York 1 (Semien, Young).

San Diego	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Buehler, L, 7-6	6.0	2	2	2	2	4	86	4.79
Hart	2.0	3	0	0	0	3	32	4.03

Mets	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
McLean, W, 9-8	6.0	6	1	1	4	3	103	3.34
Pintaro, H, 1.1	1.1	1	0	0	1	0	14	3.86
Lavender, H, 5	0.2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.00
Duarte, S, 2-2	1.0	0	0	0	0	2	14	0.89
T: 2:23. A: 27,842 (42,136).								

Phillies 6, Marlins 5

Miami	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Ruiz cf	3	0	2	0	0	0	.259
Marsee ph-cf	2	0	0	0	0	1	.208
Hernández lf	4	0	0	0	1	2	.228
Edwards 2b	5	2	2	0	0	1	.285
Ramírez dh	4	1	2	0	1	0	.250
Lopez ss	4	1	2	1	1	1	.310
Sanoja 3b	5	0	2	2	0	0	.272
Jiménez 1b	4	0	1	0	1	2	.208
Conine rf	4	0	1	1	0	1	.273
Navarro c	4	1	2	1	0	1	.148
Totals	39	5	14	5	4	9	

Philadelphia	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Schwarber dh	4	0	1	1	0	2	.247
Turner ss	4	1	1	1	1	0	.247
Harper rf	4	1	3	0	1	0	.260
De La Cruz rf	0	0	0	0	0	0	.333
Arraez 2b	5	0	1	1	0	0	.314
Bohm 1b	4	1	1	1	0	0	.242
Stott 3b	3	1	1	0	2	0	.266
Marsh lf	3	0	0	0	0	0	.272
Realmut c	2	1	1	0	2	0	.217
Crawford cf	1	1	1	0	0	0	.267
Hill ph-cf	1	0	1	2	1	0	.236
Totals	31	6	11	6	7	2	

Miami	000	001	211	—	5	14	1
Philadelphia	002	002	11x	—	6	11	0
E: Jiménez (4). LOB: Miami 11, Philadelphia 12. 2B: Ramírez (8), Sanoja (26), Crawford (17). HR: Navarro (1), off Raley. RBIs: Conine (30), Sanoja 2 (47), Navarro (1), Lopez (54), Turner (48), Arraez (52), Hill 2 (24), Schwarber (73), Bohm (69). CS: Ruiz (6). SF: Schwarber. S: Crawford, Marsh. Runners left in scoring position: Miami 7 (Conine 3, Edwards, Navarro, Jiménez 2); Philadelphia 5 (Schwarber 2, Marsh 2, Harper). RISP: Miami 3 for 13; Philadelphia 5 for 12. DP: Miami 2 (Sanoja, Edwards, Jiménez; Sanoja, Edwards, Jiménez); Philadelphia 1 (Stott, Arraez).							

Miami	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Junk, L, 6-8	5.0	8	2	2	2	2	88	4.37
King	1.0	1	2	2	3	0	25	3.88
Vodnik	1.0	0	1	0	2	0	32	5.14
Gibson	1.0	2	1	1	0	0	23	5.61
Philadelphia	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Sánchez, W, 16-4	6.0	8	1	1	3	6	90	2.51
Bowlan, H, 10	1.0	3	2	2	1	2	34	2.96
Raley, H, 15	0.2	1	1	1	0	0	9	2.30
Kerker, H, 14	0.1	0	0	0	0	1	5	3.70
Duran, S, 27-29	1.0	2	1	1	0	0	10	1.83

T: 3:09. A: 37,544 (42,901).

Cardinals 2, Reds, 1st Game

St. Louis	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Báez lf	4	1	0	0	0	1	.231
Church cf	0	0	0	0	0	0	.233
Herrera dh	2	1	0	0	3	0	.248
Walker rf	4	0	2	0	0	1	.286
Burleson 1b	4	0	2	2	0	1	.290
Fermin 2b	3	0	0	0	0	0	.239
Crooks c	1	0	0	0	0	1	.183
Winn ss	4	0	1	0	0	2	.236
Jordan 3b	3	0	1	0	1	1	.253
Pereira cf-lf	4	0	1	0	0	1	.237
Pagés c	2	0	0	0	0	1	.207
Wetherholt ph-2b	2	0	0	0	0	0	.242
Totals	33	2	7	2	4	9	

Cincinnati	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
De La Cruz ss	4	0	0	0	0	4	.259
Stewart 1b-3b	4	0	1	0	0	1	.258
Stephenson c	3	0	0	0	1	2	.248
Suárez dh	4	0	0	0	0	2	.202
Myers cf	4	1	2	1	0	1	.255
Toglia lf-1b	3	0	0	0	1	2	.133
McLain 2b	2	0	0	0	1	0	.193
Marte rf	3	0	0	0	0	2	.189
Hayes 3b	2	0	0	0	0	1	.146
Bleday ph-lf	1	0	0	0	0	0	.217
Totals	30	1	3	1	3	15	

St. Louis	200	000	000	—	2	7	0
Cincinnati	000	100	000	—	1	3	0

LOB: St. Louis 9, Cincinnati 5. **2B:** Burleson (32), Walker (27), Stewart (24). **3B:** Jordan (4). **HR:** Myers (4), off Mathews. **RBI:** Burleson 2 (92), Myers (19). **Runners left in scoring position:** St. Louis 5 (Báez 2, Fermin, Winn, Burleson); Cincinnati 3 (Stephenson, Hayes 2). **St. Louis** 1 for 13; Cincinnati 0 for 2. **GISP:** Fermin. **DP:** Cincinnati 1 (McLain, Stewart).

Twins 4, Braves 2

Atlanta	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Baldwin c	5	1	2	0	0	0	.276
Acuña dh	4	0	1	2	0	3	.245
Olson 1b	3	0	1	0	1	1	.264
Harris cf	4	0	1	0	0	0	.288
Dubón lf	3	0	0	0	1	1	.260
Albies 2b	4	0	1	0	0	1	.251
Yastrzemski rf	3	0	0	0	1	0	.226
Riley 3b	4	1	1	0	0	2	.224
Jarvis ss	3	0	0	0	0	0	.217
Smith ph	1	0	0	0	0	0	.263
Totals	34	2	7	2	3	8	

Minnesota	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Keaschall rf	5	1	2	0	0	1	.268
Buxton cf	3	1	1	0	1	0	.257
Jeffers c	4	1	0	0	1	0	.279
Bell dh	3	1	2	1	0	1	.256
Lewis 1b	4	0	1	1	0	1	.243
Clemens 2b-lf	4	0	2	1	0	0	.233
B.Lee 3b	3	0	0	0	0	1	.243
Culpepper ss	4	0	1	0	0	2	.250
Roden lf	3	0	1	0	0	0	.241
Kreidler pr-2b	0	0	0	0	0	0	.228
Totals	33	4	10	4	3	5	

Atlanta	000	020	000	—	2	7	1
Minnesota	400	000	00x	—	4	10	0

E: Kerr (1). **LOB:** Atlanta 8, Minnesota 11. **2B:** Baldwin (10), Olson (31), Keaschall (19), Bell (25). **RBIs:** Acuña 2 (34), Bell 2 (74), Lewis (45), Clemens (58). **S:** Roden. **Runners left in scoring position:** Atlanta 3 (Dubón, Albies, Baldwin); Minnesota 5 (Jeffers 3, Clemens, Roden). **RISP:** Atlanta 1 for 6; Minnesota 3 for 12. **DP:** Atlanta 1 (Jarvis, Albies, Olson).

Atlanta	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Pérez, L, 8-7	5.0	9	4	4	2	3	82	3.15
Mederos	1.0	0	0	0	0	1	10	3.48
Kinley	0.2	0	0	0	1	1	18	4.01
Kerr	1.1	1	0	0	0	0	21	0.00

Minnesota	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Ober	4.1	6	2	2	1	4	94	4.62
Rogers	0.2	0	0	0	0	0	11	4.93
Adams, W, 3-0	2.0	0	0	0	0	3	18	5.62
Hoffman, H, 15	1.0	1	0	0	1	1	20	3.83
Gómez, S, 18-18	1.0	0	0	0	1	0	19	3.31

T: 2:40. **A:** 19,990 (38,544).

Dodgers 11, Rockies 5

Los Angeles	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Ohtani dh	5	4	4	3	0	0	.295
Rortvedt ph-dh	1	0	0	0	0	0	.167
Freeman 1b	5	2	3	1	0	0	.302
Call lf	0	0	0	0	0	0	.254
Pages cf	4	2	3	2	1	0	.274
Muncy 3b	4	2	2	3	1	0	.252
Betts ss	5	0	1	2	0	0	.235
Rojas ss	0	0	0	0	0	0	.284
Tucker rf	5	0	0	0	0	0	.230
Edman 2b	4	1	1	0	0	1	.265
T.Hernández lf	4	0	0	0	0	2	.247
E.Hernández 1b	1	0	0	0	0	0	.214
Feduccia c	4	0	0	0	1	1	.234
Totals	42	11	14	11	3	4	

Colorado	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
McCarthy lf	3	0	0	1	0	1	.294
Veen lf	2	0	1	0	1	0	.286
Beck rf	5	0	0	0	0	1	.185
Carrigg cf	4	0	0	0	0	1	.286
Castro 3b	4	1	1	0	0	1	.262
Rumfield 1b	3	1	1	0	0	0	.291
Norby 2b	4	1	1	0	0	0	.204
Amador dh	3	2	1	1	1	1	.400
Sullivan c	2	0	1	1	1	0	.244
Tovar ss	2	0	0	1	1	0	.207
Totals	32	5	6	5	3	6	

Los Angeles	014	023	010	—	11	14	1
Colorado	001	000	103	—	5	6	2

E: Tucker (4), Norby (4), Carrigg (4). **LOB:** Los Angeles 8, Colorado 6. **2B:** Betts (14), Pages (25), Freeman 2 (29), Veen (1). **HR:** Muncy (25), off Sugano; Ohtani (28), off Sugano; Ohtani (29), off Mejia. **RBIs:** Betts 2 (42), Pages 2 (80), Muncy 3 (63), Ohtani 3 (77), Freeman (58), McCarthy (68), Sullivan (28), Amador (4), Tovar (38), Veen (6). **SB:** McCarthy (21). **SF:** Sullivan, Tovar. **Runners left in scoring position:** Los Angeles 5 (Betts 2, T.Hernández, Rortvedt, Tucker); Colorado 5 (Sullivan, Beck 2, Carrigg 2). **RISP:** Los Angeles 5 for 16; Colorado 3 for 11.

Los Angeles	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Snell, W, 1-1	6.0	2	1	1	3	5	90	3.60
Vesia	1.0	0	1	0	0	0	10	2.91
Phillips	1.0	0	0	0	0	1	6	4.85
Díaz	1.0	4	3	3	0	0	231	1.85

Colorado	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Sugano, L, 12-6	5.0	7	7	6	1	3	89	4.70
Mejia	1.0	5	3	3	0	0	33	5.85
Shook	2.0	2	1	1	1	1	34	8.22
Johnston	1.0	0	0	0	1	0	21	0.00

T: 2:45. **A:** 34,609 (50,144).

Cubs 7, White Sox 5, 10 inn.

White Sox	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Meidroth 2b	5	0	0	0	0	4	.275
Murakami 1b	2	2	0	0	3	1	.233
Vargas 3b	4	1	1	0	1	2	.239
Grichuk dh	3	1	1	3	0	1	.277
Benintendi ph-dh	2	1	1	2	0	1	.249
B.Montgomery rf	4	0	1	0	1	1	.238
Doyle cf	3	0	0	0	0	1	.215
Peters ph-cf	2	0	0	0	0	0	.271
Antonacci lf	3	0	0	0	0	1	.273
Acuña ss	3	0	0	0	1	1	.237
Rogers c	2	0	0	0	2	1	.173
Totals	33	5	4	5	8	14	

Cubs	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Crow-Armstrong cf	5	2	4	3	1	1	.281
Suzuki rf	4	2	1	1	1	2	.273
Busch 1b	5	0	0	0	0	0	.243
Bregman 3b	4	0	3	0	1	0	.255
1-T.Taylor pr	0	1	0	0	0	0	.236
Miller 2b	0	0	0	0	0	0	---
Happ lf	3	1	1	0	1	0	.215
Hoerner ss	5	0	4	2	0	0	.265
Ramirez 2b-3b	4	0	0	0	1	1	.290
Conforto dh	2	0	0	0	0	0	.226
Alcantara ph-dh	2	0	0	0	0	1	.217
Amaya ph-dh	1	0	0	0	0	1	.240
Kelly c	5	1	1	0	0	0	.260
Totals	40	7	14	6	5	6	

White Sox	000	300	020	0	—	5	4	4
Cubs	200	020	001	2	—	7	14	0

No outs when winning run scored. **E:** Castillo (), Vargas (9). **LOB:** Chicago (A) 8, Chicago (N) 13. **2B:** Bregman (24), Crow-Armstrong (25). **HR:** Grichuk (10), off Imanaga; Benintendi (13), off Zeferjahn; Crow-Armstrong (29), off Castillo; Suzuki (22), off Castillo; Crow-Armstrong (30), off Smith. **RBIs:** Grichuk 3 (31), Benintendi 2 (62), Crow-Armstrong 3 (78), Suzuki (74), Hoerner 2 (58). **SB:** Crow-Armstrong (31). **S:** Happ. **Runners left in scoring position:** Chicago (A) 2 (Peters 2); Chicago (N) 8 (Hoerner, Ramirez 2, Busch, Suzuki 2, Kelly 2). **RISP:** Chicago (A) 1 for 4; Chicago (N) 4 for 16. **Runners moved up:** Happ. **GIDP:** Rogers. **DP:** Chicago (N) 1 (Hoerner, Ramirez, Busch).

White Sox	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Castillo	4.2	8	4	3	1	1	99	4.99
Schweitzer	1.2	2	0	0	1	2	28	2.59
Richards	1.1	2	0	0	0	1	19	3.18
Hicks, BS, 1-3	1.1	1	1	1	3	2	30	3.32
Smith, L, 2-1	0.0	1	2	1	0	0	4	1.93
Cubs	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Imanaga	6.0	2	3	3	3	10	96	3.77
Rolison, H, 6	0.2	0	0	0	1	0	15	2.54
Zeferjahn,	1.0	2	2	2	1	1	24	4.11
BS, 4-7								
Peterson	1.1	0	0	0	1	1	22	5.29
Webb, W, 5-2	1.0	0	0	0	2	2	22	2.29

T: 3:21. **A:** 40,354 (41,363).

Tennis

Western & Southern Open
At Lindner Family Tennis Center;
Cincinnati; Purse: \$9,415,725;
Surface: Hardcourt outdoor; Monday
(seedings in parentheses):
Men's Singles - Round of 32
Thiago Agustín Tirante, Argentina, def. Martín Landaluce, Spain, 7-6 (5), 7-6 (4).
Flavio Cobolli (7), Italy, def. Alexander Blockx (28), Belgium, 7-5, 4-6, 7-5.
Alex de Minaur (5), Australia, def.
Arthur Fery (32), Britain, 7-5, 7-6 (3).
Rafael Jodar (12), Spain, def.
Alejandro Tabilo (22), Chile, 6-2, 6-1.
Jakub Mensik (14), Czechia, def. Rinky Hijikata, Australia, 6-3, 6-4.
Alexander Zverev (1), Germany, def.
Terence Atmane, France, 7-6 (4), 7-6 (6)
Arthur Fils (21), France, def. Jiri Lehecka (9), Czechia, 6-1, 6-7 (7), 6-3.
Women's Singles - Round of 32
Iga Swiatek (7), Poland, def. Maria Sakkari (29), Greece, 4-6, 6-1, 6-1.
Diane Parry, France, def. Lois Boisson, France, 4-6, 6-4, 6-3.
Elena Rybakina (2), Kazakhstan, def. Magdalena Frech, Poland, 6-4, 7-6 (2).
Sorana Cirstea (15), Romania, def.
Anna Kalinskaya (18), Russia, 6-7 (4), 6-1, 5-0, ret.
Diana Shnaider (14), Russia, def. Maja Chwalinska (19), Poland, 6-2, 7-6 (3).
Linda Noskova (6), Czechia, def. Clara Tauson (27), Denmark, 7-6 (3), 6-2.
Jessica Pegula (3), United States, def. Emma Navarro (25), United States, 7-5, 6-2.

MLS

EAST	W	L	D	Pts	GF	GA
Nashville	13	2	4	43	39	15
Inter Miami CF	11	3	5	38	46	36
Chicago	10	6	2	32	34	24
New England	9	7	3	30	29	25
Charlotte FC	8	7	4	28	32	28
Cincinnati	7	6	6	27	46	45
NYCFC	7	7	5	26	33	27
Red Bulls	7	8	4	25	30	41
D.C. United	5	5	9	24	27	30
Orlando City	6	10	3	21	31	48
Columbus	5	9	5	20	27	31
Toronto FC	4	7	8	20	26	33
Philadelphia	5	10	4	19	28	35
CF Montréal	4	10	5	17	25	36
Atlanta	4	12	3	15	21	34

WEST	W	L	D	Pts	GF	GA
Vancouver	11	3	4	37	40	17
Houston	11	6	2	35	28	24
Los Angeles FC	10	6	4	34	35	20
San Jose	10	6	3	33	38	27
FC Dallas	8	5	6	30	34	26
St Louis City	8	6	5	29	27	25
Real Salt Lake	8	6	4	28	30	26
Colorado	8	10	1	25	29	25
Minn. United	6	6	7	25	21	26
Portland	7	9	3	24	34	35
Seattle FC	7	8	3	24	20	24
San Diego FC	6	7	6	24	33	29
LA Galaxy	5	8	7	22	24	30
Austin FC	4	10	5	17	23	38
Sporting K.C.	4	13	2	14	18	48

Note: 3 pts. for win, 1 for tie

Wednesday

NYCFC at Cincinnati, 7:30pm
Nashville at **Red Bulls**, 7:30pm
CF Montréal at Columbus, 7:30pm
New England at D.C. United, 7:30pm
Chicago at Orlando City, 7:30pm
Miami at Philadelphia, 7:30pm
Charlotte FC at Toronto FC, 7:30pm
St Louis City at Sporting K.C., 8pm
Atlanta at Minnesota, 8:30pm
Los Angeles FC at Colorado, 9:30pm
FC Dallas at Salt Lake, 9:30pm
Austin FC at Seattle FC, 9:30pm
San Jose at LA Galaxy, 10:30pm
San Diego FC at Portland, 10:30pm
Houston at Vancouver, 10:30pm

Saturday

Chicago at **Red Bulls**, 7:30pm
D.C. United at Charlotte FC, 7:30pm
Seattle FC at Cincinnati, 7:30pm
Toronto FC at Miami, 7:30pm
LA Galaxy at CF Montréal, 7:30pm
Salt Lake at Orlando City, 7:30pm
Philadelphia at Austin FC, 8:30pm
Columbus at Nashville, 8:30pm
Houston at St Louis City, 8:30pm
FC Dallas at Vancouver, 9:30pm
Portland at Los Angeles FC, 10:30pm
Colorado at San Diego FC, 10:30pm
Minnesota at San Jose, 10:30pm

Sunday3

NYCFC at New England, 4:30pm
Sporting K.C. at Atlanta, 7pm

Soccer

English League Championship
Cardiff City 1, Wrexham 1
Spanish LaLiga
Deportivo 1, Eiche 1
Coppa Italia
Pisa 1, Empoli 1
(Pisa wins 4-3 on penalties)
Sassuolo 3, Cesena 0
Cremonese 2, Sampdoria 0
Palermo 2, Lecce 0
Portuguese Primeira Liga
Benfica 7, Casa Pia 0
Brazilian Serie A
Internacional 1, Remo 1

NFL Preseason - Wk. 2

Thursday

Las Vegas at Houston, 8pm
San Francisco at L.A. Chargers, 10pm

Friday

Jets at Pittsburgh, 7pm
Carolina at Jacksonville, 7:30pm
Green Bay at Denver, 9pm

Saturday

The POST Line

NFL Preseason - Wk. 2

MLB Tuesday American League		
Favorite	Money Line	Underdog
Yankees	-110-111	ORIOLES
RAYS	\$120-142	Blue Jays
ROYALS	OFF	Athletics
ASTROS	\$139-169	Angels

National League		
Favorite	Money Line	Underdog
Padres	-104-112	METS
PHILLIES	\$198-240	Marlins
Cardinals	-105-115	REDS
Dodgers	\$144-175	ROCKIES

Interleague		
Favorite	Money Line	Underdog
GUARDIANS	\$149-181	Giants
PIRATES	\$118-142	Tigers
RED SOX	\$141-171	D'backs
BREWERS	\$130-157	Mariners
Braves	\$109-132	TWINS
RANGERS	\$134-162	Nationals
CUBS	\$144-175	White Sox

Home team in CAPS

WNBA		
Tuesday		
Favorite	PTS (O/U)	Underdog
Liberty	4.5 (182.5)	SKY
Fever	9.5 (192.5)	TEMPO
Sparks	1.5 (172.5)	SUN
ACES	3.5 (179.5)	Dream

Thursday		
Favorite	PTS (O/U)	Underdog
TEXANS	1.5 (38.5)	Raiders
CHARGERS	1.5 (39.5)	49ers

Friday		
Favorite	PTS (O/U)	Underdog
STEELERS	3.5 (39.5)	Jets
JAGUARS	1.5 (39.5)	Panthers
BRONCOS	6.5 (38.5)	Packers

Saturday		
Favorite	PTS (O/U)	Underdog
Giants	2.5 (37.5)	DOLPHINS
LIONS	3 (35.5)	Redskins
COLTS	3 (37.5)	Falcons
BROWNS	1.5 (39.5)	Bills
VIKINGS	3 (37.5)	Ravens
Saints	1.5 (37.5)	LA RAMS
PATRIOTS	1.5 (38.5)	Eagles
BENGALS	1.5 (40.5)	Bears
BUCCANEERS	3.5 (37.5)	Chiefs
CARDINALS	1.5 (37.5)	Cowboys

Sunday		
Favorite	PTS (O/U)	Underdog
TITANS	3 (38.5)	Seahawks

Home team in CAPS

College Football

Saturday, Aug. 29

Favorite	PTS (O/U)	Underdog
Tcu	7.5 (47.5)	North Carolina
USC	38.5 (60.5)	San Jose State
N. DAKOTA ST.	7 (47.5)	Jacksonville St.
VIRGINIA	5.5 (53.5)	Nc State
STANFORD	6 (49.5)	Hawaii
E. MICHIGAN	8.5 (52.5)	Sacramento St.
FLORIDA ST.	31.5 (52.5)	New Mexico St.
UNLV	6 (57.5)	Memphis

*game held in Dublin, Ireland

Home team in CAPS

SPORTS SHORTS

NFL: Ravens legend Brigrance dies

O.J. Brigrance, who won a Super Bowl with the Ravens before waging an unyielding battle against amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, died, the Ravens announced. He was 56.

● Saints rookie receiver **Jordyn Tyson** could miss the next two months with a hamstring injury, per NFL Network.

MLB: PCA's walk-off blast lifts Cubs

In Chicago, **Pete Crow-Armstrong** hit his first career walk-off homer, a two-run shot in the 10th inning, and the Cubs rallied for a 7-5 win over the crosstown White Sox.

● In Denver, **Shohei Ohtani** homered twice to help spark a slumping Dodgers offense, **Blake Snell** struck out five over six innings, and Los Angeles beat the Rockies 11-5.

● In Pittsburgh, **Kevin McGonigle** hit a two-run homer, and the Tigers held off the Pirates 8-5 and moved into a three-way tie for

the final AL wild-card spot.

● MLB's team owners unanimously approved the sale of the Padres to an investor group led by private equity billionaire **José E. Feliciano** and his wife and business partner, **Kwanza Jones**.

● The Diamondbacks placed All-Star second baseman **Ketel Marte** on the restricted list after he went AWOL for the second straight season.

ETC.: FIFA COO out

FIFA confirmed that COO **Kevin Lamour** has left the governing body, weeks after he publicly criticized President **Gianni Infantino's** plan to sell a stake in its tournament business, including the World Cup.

● In Mason, Ohio, **Serena** and **Venus Williams** played their first doubles match together since the 2022 U.S. Open and lost a thriller, 2-6, 6-1 (10-8) to **Marta Kostyuk** and **Peyton Stearns** at the Cincinnati Open.

TOP PLAY

Final won't be Sky high

By MALIK SMITH

The Liberty have been on an upswing since late July and look to keep the good vibes rolling when they head to Chicago to face the Sky on Tuesday night.

The Liberty enter the game as road 4.5-point favorites, but their record against the spread on the road has been abysmal — they are 3-15 ATS in road games and 1-11 ATS as a road favorite.

New York has a 9-2 record over its past 11 games and should be well rested with two days off since its last game. The Sky are coming off a three-game road trip that ended Sunday in Seattle.

The Liberty certainly haven't been perfect over this past month, but their offense

has been one of the best in the league recently. Since the start of their 11-game run, they have the fourth-highest scoring offense in the league at 117.3 points per 100 possessions.

The Sky, who struggle to score, have been good defensively. They defend the paint with the best teams in the W and guard the 3-point line well. The Liberty love to play in the paint and take a ton of 3s, but I expect they'll have a tough time generating good shots against this defense.

For much of the season, the Over has been a good bet for both teams, but this feels like a great spot to fade. With the total at 182.5 or higher, the Over is 0-4 in Sky games and 4-3 in Liberty games.

THE PLAY: Liberty-Sky Under 182.5.

Pitching Form

		(Game time)	2026		'26 vs OPP		CAREER	LAST 3 STARTS			
			W-L	ERA	*REC	W-L	ERA	vs OPP	W-L	IP	ERA
Yankees	Rodon (L)	—	4-2	3.30	5-4	0-0	0.00	2-3	2-0	15.1	3.52
Orioles	Baz (R)	(6:35pm)	4-12	4.00	6-18	0-1	7.94	0-2	0-3	17.1	4.15
Padres	Ray (L)	—	10-7	3.28	14-9	1-0	3.38	5-2	1-1	15.0	4.20
Mets	Thornton (L)	(7:10pm)	3-3	2.78	3-5	0-0	0.00	0-0	1-2	15.2	3.45
Tigers	Montero (R)	—	9-7	3.22	10-10	0-0	1.80	0-1	2-1	18.1	2.45
Pirates	Ashcraft (R)	(6:40pm)	12-5	3.88	16-8	0-0	0.00	0-0	2-1	19.0	2.84
Giants	Whisenhunt (L)	—	3-3	6.11	3-3	0-0	0.00	0-0	1-2	12.1	8.03
Guardians	Griffin (L)	(6:40pm)	13-4	3.25	18-6	0-0	1.50	0-0	1-2	14.1	7.53
D'Backs	Kelly (R)	—	8-10	5.11	9-13	0-0	0.00	2-1	0-2	15.2	6.89
Red Sox	Suarez (L)	(7:10pm)	4-3	3.25	12-9	0-0	0.00	1-4	0-0	12.2	4.97
Braves	Mahle (R)	—	4-9	4.64	7-13	1-1	4.22	2-1	1-0	17.2	3.06
Twins	Matthews (R)	(7:40pm)	6-8	5.34	8-8	0-0	0.00	0-0	2-0	15.0	6.00
Mariners	Miller (R)	—	4-6	3.39	4-10	0-0	0.00	1-0	0-1	16.1	6.06
Brewers	Harrison (L)	(7:40pm)	9-3	3.47	13-6	0-0	0.00	0-0	1-2	13.2	7.24
Athletics	Perkins (R)	—	2-9	7.27	1-10	0-0	0.00	0-0	0-3	13.1	11.48
Royals	TBD	(7:40pm)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nationals	Kent (L)	—	0-0	6.75	0-1	0-0	0.00	0-0	0-0	4.0	6.75
Rangers	Quantrill (R)	(8:05pm)	4-4	3.44	3-5	0-0	5.40	0-1	1-1	16.1	1.65
Blue Jays	Soriano (R)	—	9-6	3.16	14-10	1-0	0.00	2-2	1-0	15.2	1.15
Rays	Martinez (R)	(6:40pm)	12-3	2.74	18-5	2-0	1.64	3-2	2-1	20.2	4.35
White Sox	TBD	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cubs	Gausman (R)	(8:05pm)	6-11	4.53	10-15	0-0	0.00	2-0	2-1	17.1	4.67
Angels	Klassen (R)	—	1-1	5.52	3-1	0-0	0.00	0-0	1-1	12.0	5.25
Astros	Javier (R)	(8:10pm)	1-3	6.68	1-5	1-0	5.59	6-1	0-2	14.0	6.43
Marlins	TBD	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Phillies	Wheeler (R)	(6:40pm)	10-4	2.89	14-6	2-0	3.60	14-4	0-2	12.1	5.84
Cardinals	Leahy (R)	—	9-4	3.38	11-12	0-0	6.00	0-0	2-0	16.0	2.25
Reds	Abbott (L)	(6:40pm)	6-7	4.13	13-12	0-0	3.00	4-4	1-1	16.0	6.19
Dodgers	Lauer (L)	—	7-6	4.67	11-5	1-0	3.00	3-6	2-1	16.1	3.86
Rockies	Feltner (R)	(8:40pm)	5-6	5.59	8-10	0-0	3.18	1-3	2-1	16.1	4.96

* REC: Won-lost record of pitcher's team in games he has started.

STITCHES

Another payday. Jays slay

“Aaron Boone has been ejected 50 times. Now it's time for the Yankees to throw him out of the game.” — Ray, *Parkchester*

Congratulations, Aaron! You've been tossed more times than the salad bar at Golden Corral.

Have you tossed Toronto from the postseason? The Jays are 61-65 but find themselves squarely on the play-off bubble. They have been riddled with injuries, the latest being Vlad Guerrero Jr. (concussion). The Jays

visit the Rays. José Soriano has allowed four runs in his last 22 ⅔ innings. Tampa's Nick Martinez has won two in a row, giving up four runs in those 14 ⅔ innings. No Vlad, but we will take Soriano and the Bluebirds for \$50.

-\$

Two words. Martin. Short. Martin Pérez came up small, giving up 4 runs in the 1st frame. The Braves comeback fell, short. Final 4-2. Down -488 edgrimleys.

stitches@nypost.com

Home Team Lineups

HOME AWAY

	TODAY Aug. 18	WED Aug. 19	THU Aug. 20	FRI Aug. 21	SAT Aug. 22
	Baltimore 6:35 YES 660 AM 101.9 FM	Baltimore 6:35 Prime Video 660 AM 101.9 FM	Baltimore 6:35 YES 660 AM 101.9 FM	Toronto 7:05 YES 660 AM 101.9 FM	Toronto 1:35 YES 660 AM
	San Diego 7:10 SNY 880 AM	San Diego 1:10 SNY 880 AM	NO GAME	White Sox 7:40 PIX11 880 AM	White Sox 7:10 SNY 880 AM
	Chicago 9:00 ESPN	NO GAME	NO GAME	NO GAME	Indiana 7:00 Prime Video

Saturday		Friday	
	Preseason: Miami 4:00 WNBC 4 101.9 FM		Preseason: Pittsburgh 7:00 WCBS 2 104.3 FM

Wednesday		Wednesday		Sunday	
	Nashville SC 7:30 Apple TV		FC Cincinnati 7:30 Apple TV		Angel City FC 8:00 ION

Today's Sports on the Air

MLB BASEBALL		
6:30 p.m.	Blue Jays at Rays	MLBN
6:35 p.m.	Yankees at Orioles	YES, 660 AM, 101.9 FM
7:10 p.m.	Padres at Mets	SNY, 880 AM
8 p.m.	White Sox at Cubs	TBS
WNBA BASKETBALL		
7 p.m.	Fever at Tempo	ESPN
9 p.m.	Liberty at Sky	ESPN
TENNIS		
11 a.m.	ATP/WTB Cincinnati Open: 3rd Round	Tennis
HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL		
6 p.m.	American Legion World Series Championship: Portland, Ore. vs. Lincoln, Neb.	ESPNU

TENNIS

Favorites to win U.S. Open

Men's singles

PLAYER	ODDS
Jannik Sinner	-130
Carlos Alcaraz	+330
Alexander Zverev	+600
Novak Djokovic	11/1
Ben Shelton	12/1
Rafael Nadal	22/1
Taylor Fritz	25/1
Daniil Medvedev	35/1
Felix Auger Aliassime	45/1
Arthur Fils	50/1
Jakub Mensik	50/1
Joao Fonseca	50/1
Tommy Paul	80/1
Lorenzo Musetti	80/1
Jack Draper	80/1
Flavio Cobolli	100/1
Frances Tiafoe	100/1
Alex De Minaur	100/1
Casper Ruud	125/1
Karen Khachanov	125/1
Andrey Rublev	125/1
Alexander Bublik	125/1
Hubert Hurkacz	125/1
Jiri Lehecka	125/1
Learner Tien	125/1
Matteo Berrettini	150/1
Ugo Humbert	150/1
Brandon Nakashima	150/1

Women's singles

PLAYER	ODDS
Aryna Sabalenka	+280
Iga Swiatek	+550
Coco Gauff	+700
Elena Rybakina	+950
Naomi Osaka	10/1
Mirra Andreeva	12/1
Jessica Pegula	14/1
Marta Kostyuk	17/1
Alexandra Eala	19/1
Amanda Anisimova	20/1
Linda Noskova	22/1
Madison Keys	22/1
Karolina Muchova	22/1
Iva Jovic	25/1
Elina Svitolina	33/1
Emma Navarro	55/1
Belinda Bencic	60/1
Ekaterina Alexandrova	70/1
Barbora Krejckova	70/1
Diana Shnaider	70/1
Jasmine Paolini	75/1
Paula Badosa	75/1
Anna Kalinskaya	75/1
Jelena Ostapenko	80/1
Daria Kasatkina	80/1
Clara Tauson	80/1
Tereza Valentova	80/1
Anastasia Potapova	80/1

ODDS & ENDS

NBA

Odds to make/miss
2026-27 playoffs

TEAM RESULT	ODDS
Bucks make	18/1
Bucks miss	-10000
Bulls make	12/1
Bulls miss	-3000
Cavaliers make	-375
Cavaliers miss	+300
Celtics make	-1000
Celtics miss	+650
Clippers make	+350
Clippers miss	-450
Grizzlies make	+750
Grizzlies miss	-1200
Hawks make	-150
Hawks miss	+125
Heat make	-275
Heat miss	+225
Hornets make	+175
Hornets miss	-210
Jazz make	+165
Jazz miss	-200
Kings make	22/1
Kings miss	-10000
Knicks make	-1400
Knicks miss	+800
Lakers make	-425
Lakers miss	+325
Magic make	-135
Magic miss	+115
Mavericks make	+225
Mavericks miss	-275
Nets make	28/1
Nets miss	-10000
Nuggets make	-1000
Nuggets miss	+650
Pacers make	-200
Pacers miss	+165
Pelicans make	+650
Pelicans miss	-1000
Pistons make	-800
Pistons miss	+550
Raptors make	-220
Raptors miss	+180
Rockets make	-450
Rockets miss	+350
Sixers make	-700
Sixers miss	+500
Spurs make	-10000
Spurs miss	50/1
Suns make	-120
Suns miss	+100
Thunder make	-10000
Thunder miss	50/1
Timberwolves make	-1000
Timberwolves miss	+650
Trail Blazers make	-200
Trail Blazers miss	+165
Warriors make	-140
Warriors miss	+115
Wizards make	+300
Wizards miss	-375

BET SMART

I-‘O’-wa
no longer
auto-bet
for Under

NOT YOUR FATHER’S HAWKEYES: Iowa used to be ‘Under’ country, but now with explosive back Xavier Williams (above) and innovative offensive coaching, the Hawkeyes should score a lot. Michael Calabrese likes the Over vs. NIU in the opener.

By MICHAEL CALABRESE

Dating to 2003, Iowa has been the third-most profitable Under bet in the Big Ten. This is the same program that once had fans in its student section with T-shirts that read, “Punting is winning.” But times change, even for the sport’s elder statesman, Kirk Ferentz. Entering his 28th season in charge of the Iowa Hawkeyes, Ferentz may have his most explosive offense in more than a decade. Explosive may be a relative term, but trust me when I say this year’s Hawkeyes will be cashing plenty of Over tickets.

Recommendation: NIU-Iowa
Over 45.5

While the Hawkeyes have generally won with defense and special teams under Ferentz, they stretch their legs a bit in nonconference play, routinely laying big numbers on overmatched teams in “paycheck games.” As a result, Overs have paid out at a 59 percent clip for Iowa in nonconference games since 2023 (tied for third in the Big Ten). Tim Lester, Iowa’s offensive coordinator, made a pretty big splash in Year 1 in Iowa City. He forged a 12-point rise in points per game, and that growth continued in his second season with Iowa finishing 54th nationally at 29.3 ppg. The Greatest Show on Turf this is not, but that kind of improvement is juxtaposed with their brand perception. Casual bettors still view Iowa as the epitome of “3 yards and a cloud of dust.” This Iowa offense pumped in 30-plus points on seven occasions last season and it has dynamic playmakers in their backfield and out wide to continue that trend this fall. Xavier Williams, when healthy, is a home-run hitter out of the backfield. And the acquisition of Tony Diaz at wide receiver provides the Hawkeyes with their best big-play threat on the perimeter since Marvin

McNutt 15 years ago. Diaz earned freshman All-American honors at UT Rio Grande Valley as a speedster out of the slot. Many in recruiting circles had him pegged to sign with Alabama but he opted for Iowa. He’s been turning heads in camp and beat writers believe he’s primed for a breakout season. Diaz, Williams and Kamari Moulton will make life easier for first-time starter Jeremy Hecklinski. As for the NIU part of this equation, the Huskies will be an Over-bettor’s dream this season. The Huskies defensive two-deep is in shambles, and it’s likely they’ll field one of the worst defenses in the Mountain West this season. And offensively, they have some interesting pieces to rely upon in shoot-outs. Offensive coordinator Tony Petersen takes over play calling after doing an outstanding job at Illinois State. His Redbirds came within a point of the FCS national title. Tommy Rittenhouse, his sawed-off quarterback, finished with an eye-popping 47 total touchdowns. And Petersen has found his new triggerman after NIU pulled off a major portal coup. Taron Dickens, fresh off a 38-to-2 touchdown-to-interception season at Western Carolina, arrives with buzz and confidence. He’s accurate and a sneaky good athlete capable of extending plays with the best of them. When you pair him with Telly Johnson, a powerful back who nearly had six yards per carry last season, it’s easy to see this offense creating big plays. If this game were played four years ago, the total could have been listed at 36 and I would have played the Under. But given Iowa’s playmakers on offense, NIU’s defensive limitations and the likelihood that their quarterback upgrade pays immediate dividends, I’ve circled this one as my favorite Over of Week 1.

Getty Images

GUARD DOWN

Injuries have Libs scrambling for answers to glaring defensive issue

By MADELINE KENNEY

The 13-win Sky have given the championship-hopeful Liberty more trouble than they should have this season.

Scratch that — it's rookie Sydney Taylor who's been the main problem. Taylor torched New York in each of their previous two matchups, dropping 24 points in the June 17 meeting and 31 more July 22.

New York barely escaped each game, winning by one point twice.

In their most recent meeting, Taylor went 9-for-17 from the field and 4-for-7 from downtown. She nearly helped Chicago pull off the upset had Sabrina Ionescu not rescued the Liberty with a frantic late-game comeback.

Taylor is averaging 14.2 points this season, and her status for Tuesday's game against the Liberty is "questionable" as she's been dealing with a left groin injury.

But New York's struggles against the Sky highlight a larger issue.

If the Liberty can't stop Taylor, how can they expect to slow superstar guards on championship contenders in the playoffs?

New York's perimeter defense has looked bad for some time this season. It got embarrassed in last week's 106-92 loss in Indiana during which Caitlin Clark and Kelsey Mitchell combined for 50 points.

Indiana went 16-for-24 from 3-point range, which the Liberty somewhat shrugged off as an unusually hot



Tuesday
LIBERTY AT SKY

9 p.m.
ESPN



shooting night by the Fever.

The problem, though, is the high frequency with which the Fever generated good — sometimes wide-open — looks that night. It's been a recurring issue exacerbated in the past seven or so weeks.

The Liberty also allowed the Sparks to shoot 6-for-9 from deep during a 40-point fourth-quarter surge Thursday.

This season, the Liberty are bottom five in the league in opponent 3-pointers made (9.3 per game) and opponent 3-point percentage (35.5 percent).

It's gotten even worse over the last 15 games, with New York allowing 10.1 made 3s per game while opponents are shooting 38.4 percent from behind the arc.

The Liberty's injury situation at wing has made that problem dramatically more grave.

Leonie Fiebich, New York's most important perimeter stopper, hasn't played a game since July 3 because of a foot injury.

Satou Sabally, signed in the offseason in part to give the Liberty another big, versatile wing defender, has been dealing with the aftermath of her second concussion in less than a year.

Then, there is Betnijah Laney-Hamilton, the former WNBA All-Star and key piece of the 2024 championship team who is no longer with the Liberty.

The Liberty thought they had wing depth heading into the season.

Now they don't. The three players who were supposed to give New York size, versatility and defensive flexibility on the perimeter aren't available, causing a major strain on everyone else to pick up the slack.

The front office deserves some heat for this problem — maybe not all the heat, but a healthy dose.

On one hand, general manager Jonathan Kolb doesn't have a crystal ball to see into the future on injuries.

On the other hand, Kolb signed Sabally knowing she had an injury history. And there's always uncertainty when a player is coming off major surgery and a long layoff like Laney-Hamilton was at the age of 32.

But also, how much fault lies on the coaching staff for scheme and game prep and the players for execution?

There's plenty of blame to go around.

New York is struggling to put the clamps on dynamic guards.

Fiebich is expected to return at some point this season. Sabally's future, though, is less certain.

Fiebich should provide a boost once she is back in the mix.

Until then, though, the Liberty might be stuck treading water.

mkenney@nypost.com



THE STRUGGLE IS REAL: Though the Liberty own two wins against the Sky this season, their defensive struggles against Sydney Taylor (No. 12) highlight a teamwide issue that has been made worse by injuries to key players.

Getty Images

'Big dude' Sweat makes presence felt in 1st Jets practice

By RYAN DUNLEAVY

JETS NOTES

T'Vondre Sweat didn't draw any blood or tears.

But the 366-pound nose tackle made his presence felt Monday in 11-on-11 drills during his first training camp practice with the Jets after being activated from the non-football injury list.

"He has the ability to take up two gaps for the most part," head coach Aaron Glenn said. "And when you're able to do that as a big man, that allows the linebackers to

get a chance to run. He's going to take up two blockers, which means they're missing a blocker when you're on someone. That's the reason why he's here. I don't want to sit here and just look at him as this big run stopper because he has the ability to push the pocket in the passing game also."

Less than four weeks remain until Sweat makes his regular-season Jets debut

against the Titans, the team that traded him for edge rusher Jermaine Johnson. Sweat (three sacks in 29 career games) ranked No. 6 among NFL interior defensive linemen against the run last season.

"We want to make sure that we take our time with him," Glenn said. "I know there were a couple of times that he didn't want to come out, but that's just the guy. He's a competitor."

Running back Braelon Allen noticed it's harder to run

against the Jets defense when Sweat is on the field.

"Oh yeah, that's a big dude," Allen said. "He's hard to move, for sure."

➤ **CB Qwan'tez Stiggers** (concussion protocol) worked on the side with trainers after collapsing Tuesday during a joint practice with the Buccaneers. He was absent from only one practice.

➤ **QB Geno Smith** sat out Saturday's preseason game

due to a sore ankle but participated in team drills during Monday's relatively light practice.

"Anytime you have a situation to where you have soreness or something, I don't think it's totally gone," Glenn said. "Players understand how to manage it, and players want to practice because they want to get better. We have to do a really good job of making sure we don't push the limit so far that we end up going backwards. I want to see exactly

how he feels coming out of this practice to see how we're going to continue to move forward."

➤ **Jason Sanders** went 7-for-8 and **Cade York** went 5-for-8 in the kicking competition. Sanders' only miss was from 54 yards — and his weakness at this point in an eight-year career that includes missing all of last season (hip injury) appears to be range compared to his peers around the league.

Finally... An Alternative to Adult Diapers for Men

Stop spending a fortune on adult diapers.

Switch to Men's Liberty and pay little to no out-of-pocket cost** if you qualify for coverage through Medicare, most Medicaid plans, private insurance, workers compensation and VA/Tricare. This could save you thousands of dollars a year!



Call Today at no obligation and Receive a **FREE Week's Supply** with Your First Order!*

1-877-756-2053

MensLiberty.com/Paper



MEN'S LIBERTY	VS	ADULT DIAPERS
YES	Keeps you dry 24/7?	NO
YES	Directs urine away from the skin?	NO
YES	Reduces the risk of infections?	NO
YES	Invisible under clothing?	NO
YES	Covered by Medicare**	NO

*30 days supply or more ** Standard co-pays and deductibles apply

Thomas seizes chance

By HOWIE KUSSOY

Azareye'h Thomas saw limited snaps while starting the preseason opener.

But Aaron Glenn saw far more from the second-year Jets cornerback than a boxscore could convey.

"I was very encouraged by the way that he played in the game," the Jets head coach said following Monday's practice. "Listen, he's a [6-foot-1], 200-pound man with long arms. And the one thing I wanted to see him do is really disrupt the routes, and he did a really good job of that in man coverage. We had a very limited menu and he went out there and executed exactly as I thought he should.

"Now, is he where he needs to be? Not at all. But man, that improvement speaks a ton about how he's gone about training camp."

Thomas entered training camp in a battle with Nahshon Wright — who led the NFL with eight individual takeaways last season — for the starting cornerback spot across from Brandon Stephens. But with Wright sidelined by a hip injury, Thomas has taken advantage of another opportunity.

As a rookie, Thomas showed flashes of his potential following the trade of Sauce Gardner. In his final six games, the third-round pick out of Florida State recorded six pass breakups and 21 tackles before suffering a season-ending shoulder injury, which forced him to undergo surgery for the first time.

"It was tough, but I wouldn't take it back because I learned so much about myself, about this game and just how fragile this game truly is," said Thomas, who broke up a pass in eight snaps against the Buccaneers last week. "It's a revolving door. You just never know what happens, so you all got to stay ready. And so it was definitely challenging, but I'm thankful and I'm blessed for it. The No. 1 thing I learned is just to respond."

When the Jets line up for their second preseason game Friday in Pittsburgh, Thomas — who changed from No. 23 to Gardner's old No. 1 this season — is expected to take the field with the starters again.

Another opportunity awaits.

"When the coaches trust you, you're gonna play even harder for them," Thomas said.

HALL OF A SCARE

Jets star RB leaves practice with groin injury not believed to be 'a big deal'

By RYAN DUNLEAVY

The diagnosis for Breece Hall is a strained groin.

The diagnosis for Jets fans is recurring nightmares, though this instance might only warrant a couple weeks of bad sleep.

A fanbase scarred by too many seasons lost at takeoff due to injury — whether it was quarterbacks Vinny Testaverde (1999), Mark Sanchez (2013), Zach Wilson (2022) and Aaron Rodgers (2023) or recently paid stars having breakout training camps like Carl Lawson (2021) — suffered a scare Monday when Hall came up limping with the end zone in his sights after catching a swing pass in the flat.

Head coach Aaron Glenn tried to ease those concerns immediately after practice: "I don't think it was a big deal," he said.

SNY cited an anonymous source in reporting that an MRI confirmed the Jets' shared diagnosis of strain, sidelining Hall for weeks rather than months.

"When someone [strains] a groin, laterality will be tougher, and a little bit on full sprinting," Dr. Daniel Kaplan, a sports orthopedic surgeon at NYU Langone Health, told The Post. "But it would really be more about [limitations on] stopping and quick movements. If you think of a tendon or a muscle like a rope, a minor strain or a pull means the rope was just pulled a little too hard but none of the fibers actually tore."

Hall went to the ground untouched, grabbing at his upper right leg. He rose to his feet,

wincing and limped to the training table on the opposite sideline, where he was examined under the medical tent and then taken into the locker room.

"My stomach dropped a little bit," said Braelon Allen, who replaced Hall with the starters. "From the sound of it, it doesn't seem too serious, so I'm hoping he gets back as quickly as possible."

The Jets figure to be extra cautious with Hall — does he really need to take another snap in training camp? — after he signed a three-year, \$43.5 million extension in the off-season. He rushed for a career-high 1,056 yards last season and is expected to be a focal point for offensive coordinator Frank Reich to dust off the old plays he called for the Colts' Jonathan Taylor.

"[Injuries are] the biggest equalizer in this league," Glenn said. "As a coach, obviously you don't want to see any of your players go down, but you also have to continue to move forward. And that's the way I operate in those situations. I know that most people think that once you lose a starter there's a huge drop-off. I like to look at it as all our guys are starters and there shouldn't be a drop-off."

It's a nice thought, but depth charts and contract sizes exist for a reason.

Kaplan hasn't examined Hall but estimated from experience as a former team physician for the Chicago Bulls, White Sox and Fire that a Grade 1 strain would sideline the running back for 7-10 days — possibly up to two weeks — and he would be "good for full go" Week 1 on Sept. 13 against the Titans.

"Based on their reaction, I would be surprised if it was anything more than a low-level strain," Kaplan said. "No football moves, probably. But he wouldn't just be resting. He would be doing probably a pretty intense recovery process."

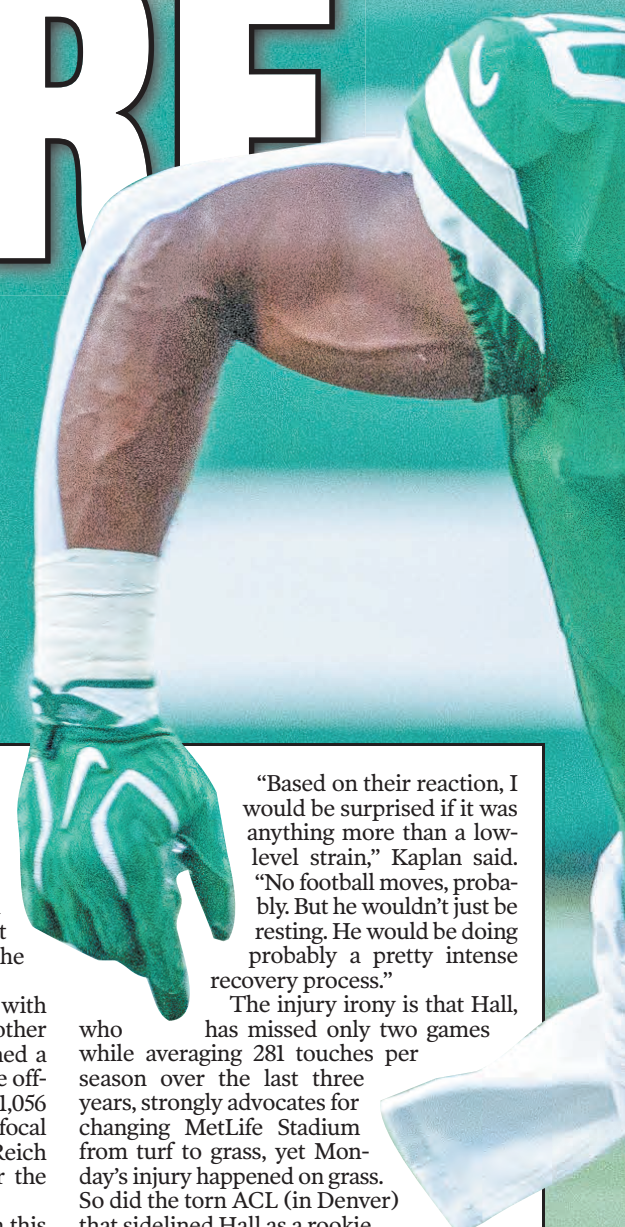
The injury irony is that Hall, who has missed only two games while averaging 281 touches per season over the last three years, strongly advocates for changing MetLife Stadium from turf to grass, yet Monday's injury happened on grass. So did the torn ACL (in Denver) that sidelined Hall as a rookie.

"One good thing about our players is that they are honest with their injuries," Glenn said. "If they can go, they can go. But we try to be cautious there with a lot of those [injuries] to make sure that we do the right things."

Hall's injury comes just as the Jets were feeling good about the possibility of a one-two punch, with the self-proclaimed 250-pound Allen offering defenses no respite when the starter checks out. Allen rushed for a 31-yard touchdown against the Buccaneers in his first game back from MCL surgery on his left knee.

"I think I'm faster and more explosive than ever," Allen said.

rdunleavy@nypost.com





BULLET DODGED: Breece Hall sustained what reports say is a strained groin Monday during practice, sidelining the star running back for a couple of weeks rather than months. Corey Sipkin

JETS TRAINING DAY

KLUB' MATURITY

Cade Klubnik led a 70-yard touchdown drive in the two-minute drill to end practice, throwing an over-the-middle strike to **Quincy Skinner Jr.**, who tapped his toes in the back of the end zone. Klubnik found **Jelani Woods** three times on the drive. He might have been sacked on a fourth-and-8, but the coaches encouraged the play to stay alive and he scrambled for a first down.

NOT-SO-SPECIAL DELIVERY

Geno Smith airtailed a pass that was intercepted by **Andre Cisco**, who is in a battle to keep his starting job from last season with ball-hawking ex-Giant **Dane Belton**. Cisco caught the ball thrown right into his chest and took off with plenty of running room.

CAUGHT MY EYE

The Jets dedicated a chunk of practice to situations where the offense was pinned against its own goal line. "Everything is magnified for the offense in a backed-up situation," head coach **Aaron Glenn** said. "Even though it doesn't happen a ton, when you go back and study it, they are critical. I want to make sure we know exactly how to operate."

INJURY REPORT

RB **Breece Hall** strained his groin, but Glenn is hopeful it's not serious. S **Minkah Fitzpatrick** and LB **Demario Davis** were given veteran rest days and did not practice. WR **Garrett Wilson** did not practice due to illness. DT **T'Vondre Sweat** and OLB **Joseph Ossai** practiced for the first time in camp. CB **Mory Bamba**, a star of the first preseason game, could miss a "couple weeks" with a knee injury. — Ryan Dunleavy

Perseverance, thy name is Williams

By HOWIE KUSSOY

He is 5-foot something, 100-and-something pounds.

He didn't start lining up at wide receiver until his third season at Illinois. He went undrafted. Then, less than two months into his second NFL season, he was cut for the third time.

Isaiah Williams was repeatedly told what the world thought of his dream.

"When you go through all these things, you go through being cut, you go through people telling you you're not good enough, you're not this, you're too small, you're too slow ... I used to focus so much about what people thought about me and the box they put me in," Williams said following Monday's Jets practice. "There have been some moments in my NFL career — one being last year — it hurt a lot."

On Oct. 4, the Jets released Williams — who had been signed off the Bengals practice squad less than a month earlier — after he fumbled a kickoff and called for a fair catch at the 3-yard line during a loss in Miami.

By the end of last season,

Jets players voted him the team MVP after he returned two punts for touchdowns while averaging 14.1 yards per punt return and 30.2 yards per kick return.

"Players like that demand respect and demand reps," head coach Aaron Glenn said recently. "What makes him such a special player is that there are so many things he can do on offense. We've got to give him the ball and make sure he's involved because he's an explosive player."



ISAIAH WILLIAMS

Williams, 25, is creating more opportunities for himself with a strong training camp, gaining the inside track for the Jets' No. 3 receiver spot — ahead of first-round pick Omar Cooper Jr. — after starting the preseason opener against the Buccaneers.

Last week, Jets wide receivers coach Shawn Jefferson described Williams as "a heartbeat on offense."

"If I was in a burning building, boop, boop, boop," Jefferson said while mimicking dialing a phone. "Hey I need you to come to get me," he's on the way. I literally watched this kid at death's

door. And just how he had the mental fortitude to just fight back ... When you're down, you're not out. Just keep going, keep pushing."

In addition to his returning duties last season, Williams had 26 catches for 193 yards — and three carries for 34 yards — offering optimism that he could make a greater impact with more playing time this season.

But it doesn't matter what anyone says.

"As guys see that you're dependable and they can trust you, more is gonna come," Williams said. "Whatever my role is, I want to be a master at it. And if you do that, all the glory will come."

"Being around so many teams, I had the opportunity to learn from so many guys. Watching how Garrett [Wilson] operates, being around [Detroit's Amon-Ra] St. Brown ... Ja'Marr Chase, Tee Higgins, I've always been observant. Everything they did, I was just watching. What makes him great? ... After a while you watch and you learn from other guys, and be like, 'OK, I know exactly how to last in this league.'"

hkussoy@nypost.com

Jets notes / P. 42

HE'S A 'SOUL' PROPRIETOR

Nabers feels his spirit return as he takes significant step forward

By ZACH BRAZILLER

Malik Nabers rose up for the pass and hauled it in between defenders, landing somewhat awkwardly. He spiked the ball.

This wasn't a reaction to feeling discomfort in his surgically repaired right knee. It was the Giants' No. 1 receiver testing the knee and letting out his emotions during his first day back this summer in full-speed team drills.

"No, I wasn't upset. It's just that dog in me is just barking a little bit," Nabers, who wore a red no-contact jersey, said. "It's just like, he's coming. That was just a little spark. So, it was just letting everybody [know] he's coming, he's waking up a little bit."

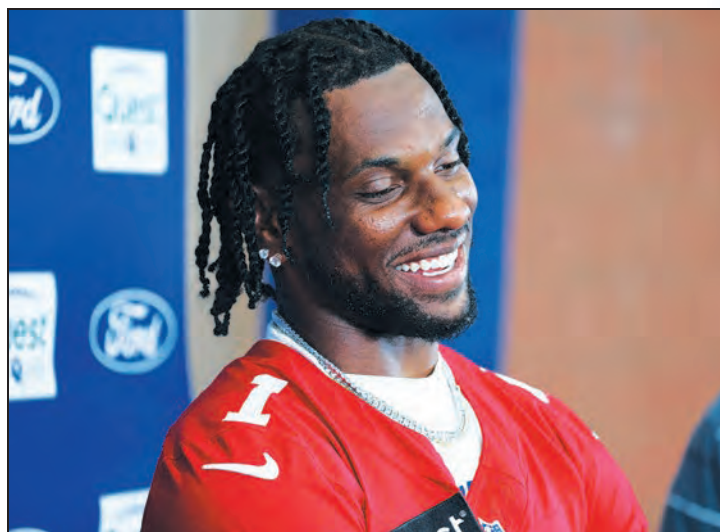
The Giants had Nabers on a strict pitch count. He logged only seven reps and made three receptions, all in seven-on-seven drills. Late in practice, he went off to the side and ran routes with a trainer, which was preplanned, according to Nabers.

The Giants are bringing him along slowly after the standout wideout suffered a torn ACL and meniscus tear in his right knee last September. Neither Nabers nor coach John Harbaugh would commit to him being ready for the regular-season opener against the Cowboys on Sept. 13, even if the odds of that happening seem to be increasing.

Nabers is happy to see progress after spending so much time waiting to get back on the field.

"My soul has been dead for so long just being away from the game," said Nabers, who caught 109 passes for 1,204 yards and seven touchdowns as a rookie in 2024. "So just getting out there and having my teammates behind me kind of felt that soul come back to life out there."

Harbaugh laughed when he was asked if, like fans and media mem-



IT'S A START: Malik Nabers is all smiles after Monday's practice, when he participated in team drills for the first time since suffering a torn ACL last September. Charles Wenzelberg; NY Post (3)

bers, he is dissecting every move Nabers makes on the field to make sure the knee is right. The first-year Giants coach was just happy to see one of his best players take a step forward.

"Once you get back into the team periods, that's a big first step," Harbaugh said.

Later, he added: "Now he's got to be in those situations where he just relearns how to play the game and protects himself. So, I think the doctors are going to know at the same time we're going to know, because we're all going to see it, and he's going to feel it."

There is still obviously a long way to go before Nabers is ready. This was just the latest step in his recovery. It sounds unlikely he will take part in Thursday's joint practice with the Dolphins. During individual one-on-one drills Monday, he stumbled after making a cut and stepped out of the drill. He returned shortly.

"I mean you're going to take

wrong steps in releases. You never know what the DB is going to do," he said. "So, it's just a reaction drill. ... I just slipped in the grass and that was really it."

There is a delicate balance for Nabers. He wants to be out there with his teammates, but health is the most important thing. It is an adjustment, needing to be patient. He's used to going all out. This is different.

"The most important thing is my health," Nabers said. "And the most important thing is just completing every milestone that they have in front of me, giving good effort, continuing to come out here and be a great teammate to my teammates."

It remains a waiting game — for the Giants, for Nabers and for Harbaugh. But Monday was significant. Perhaps it was a sign he will be in uniform in just under a month when the ball is kicked off for real.

zbraziller@nypost.com



No need to take it slow once star WR cleared

WHEN he's ready, let him play. Let the dog run free. Let him hunt for footballs, sniff the end zone and graze in it. Over and over and over again.

Make no mistake: Malik Nabers is hungry.

But the 23-year-old Giants star receiver is also trying to be smart and cautious as he makes his way back from the gruesome right knee injury he suffered 324 days ago, in a Sept. 28 game against the Chargers.

The moment Giants doctors clear Nabers to play — everyone in the team's building is willing that to be in time for the night of the Sept. 13 season opener against the Cowboys — their most dynamic offensive weapon must play.

There surely is a fine line the Giants face between the desperation of wanting their most dynamic offensive player on the field and wanting to be extra careful with him so he doesn't reinjure himself and ruin all the work he's done to return.

But, if he's cleared by doctors, there's no reason to hold Nabers back.

There should be no saving him for later in the season. Not when the team opens with the Cowboys and Rams in Weeks 1 and 2 and setting an early winning tone for the new head coach John Harbaugh era is vital.

Nabers participated Monday in team drills for the first time since his injury, a significant step in his process.

Wearing a red noncontact jersey, he was on the field for a handful of plays in 11-on-11 sessions and wasn't thrown a pass. Then he caught a few in 7-on-7 drills.

"My soul has been dead for so long just being away from the game, just being away and knowing what I could accomplish, knowing where I was before this happened," Nabers said after practice. "So, just getting out there and having my teammates behind me kind of felt that soul come back to life out there."

Nabers said it "felt good getting some team reps, getting out there, catching the football."

When asked about the challenge of remaining patient through the process, as slow and deliberate as it's gone, Nabers said, "I'm trying. I mean, I only know 100 percent every time I'm out there. I'm always trying to go full speed, always trying to play how I know how to play."

"But there comes a time with just being smart, knowing what's ahead and just being smart when I'm out there."

When Harbaugh was asked if it's a "wrestling match" for him as a coach wanting to put Nabers in the game Week 1 and being extra cautious by holding him out longer, he said, "I don't think it really is, because it just comes down to: Is he ready or not?"

"The doctors will know. The knee is stable. Now he has to get into game situations where he relearns how to play and protect himself."

"I think the doctors will know at the same time we all know, because we're all going to see it, and he's going to feel it. You're going to see him playing the game the

way it needs to look — first, that he can protect himself, and second, that he can produce.

"We're all going to know it when we see it. But ultimately, the doctors have to clear him. That's it."

Then it should be *go time* for Nabers.

"I don't think he's full speed yet or anything, but I thought he looked good," Harbaugh said. "Once you get back into the team periods, that's a big first step."

Week 1?

"We've just got to go with the process," Harbaugh said. "You can't really say. You can hope. Sure, I hope he's out there. I'm praying for it, certainly, but we'll see."

Giants veteran receiver Darius Slayton told The Post on Monday that Nabers "is kind of in that space right now where you want to let the beast go loose, but you've got to let him loose in waves."

Giants running back Cam Skattebo said he was "super excited to see" Nabers on the field participating in team drills — even if he's wearing the red jersey.

"He looked good," Skattebo said. "He's still feeling things out, getting back into it with his first couple of team reps. Hopefully, one of these days we get to see him with that red jersey off and get to see Malik Nabers back in full action."

Slayton said he's seen "flashes of, 'All right, there he is,'" with Nabers.

"But you have to be realistic, because there's a mental aspect too, him trusting his body and all that," Slayton added. "You definitely see flashes right now, and every day you see more and more of them."

Slayton, the elder statesman in the receiver room, knows what it would mean to have Nabers ready for Week 1.

"He's special," Slayton said. "His play style is different from anybody else we have."

Nabers caught a pass in a 7-on-7 drill Monday and, after falling to the ground, looked a bit frustrated.

"I wasn't upset," he explained later. "It's just that dog in me is just barking a little bit. It's just like, 'He's coming.' That was just a little spark. So, it was just letting everybody know he's coming, he's waking up a little bit."

When the doctors clear him, let the dog hunt. Hopefully in Week 1.

mcannizzaro@nypost.com



Mark Cannizzaro



BLOCK PARTY: Malik Nabers jokes around with Jaxson Dart during Monday's practice.

TEACHING MOMENT

This was tough love. Coach **John Harbaugh** and rookie cornerback **Colton Hood** had an animated conversation after Hood was called for pass interference. Hood pushed back against the call, and Harbaugh was firm that it was the correct call because Hood pushed wide receiver **Odell Beckham Jr.** while the ball was in the air.

"Here's a young corner that's going to be playing a lot of football," Harbaugh said, noting he wasn't going to let Hood get away with anything. "So, you've got to accelerate the pace with that process."

PICKED TWO PIECES

Quarterbacks **Jaxson Dart** and **Jameis Winston** threw interceptions on back-to-back plays to end practice. Dart had a pass deflected at the line of scrimmage by **Kayvon Thibodeaux** and taken the other way by **Abdul Carter** for a touchdown. Winston was picked off by **Ar'Darius Washington**.



CAUGHT MY EYE

It was an active practice for Beckham. The veteran receiver drew a penalty on Hood in the end zone, made a few plays down the field and did pushups in front of the media after looking the wrong way for the ball out of his route.

INJURY REPORT

WR **Jalin Hyatt** (ankle/leg) and DL **Josh Tupou** (undisclosed) didn't practice. Centers **John Michael Schmitz** (concussion) and **Lucas Patrick** (knee) and CBs **Greg Newsome II** (knee), **Dru Phillips** (knee) and **Paulson Adebbo** (hamstring) were all back in team drills. RB **Dante Miller** (groin) was waived with an injury designation.

— Zach Braziller

Skattebo looks to add more moves

By ZACH BRAZILLER

GIANTS NOTES

Cam Skattebo is looking to add to his game, not subtract from it.

So while, yes, you might see him run around people on occasion, his battering-ram style isn't going away, either.

"I think Coach [John Harbaugh] loves that I run right over the top of people. Physicality is his No. 1 thing, and it gets the [offensive] line going even more," Skattebo, who is entering his second season in the NFL, said after practice Monday. "So, obviously, as I came back from injury, I'm learning how to take less hits and try to maneuver better around people instead of through them and realizing that I could have got four more yards if I would have just taken a step to the left."

"I think those are things that I'm just going to continue to add to my game and add to my bag of tools that I can pull from to make sure that I stay healthy and I stay successful."

Last October, Skattebo suffered a season-ending right ankle injury that included an open tibia fracture and right ankle dislocation. However, he has been ready to go from the start of training camp and recorded four carries for 19 yards in the exhibition opener against the Vikings.

"When I went out there on Saturday, I had no feeling or any recollection of injury in my brain," he said. "I was ready to go play football, and adrenaline gets

going, so everything kind of goes away, and you're just ready to touch the ball and go play ball."

► It was a busy day of transactions for the Giants. They signed quarterback **Jake Haener** and linebacker **Chandler Martin** and waived running back **Dante Miller**, who suffered a groin injury in Saturday's preseason opener.

They also hosted veteran running back **Najee Harris** for a visit. Harris, coming off a torn Achilles tendon, spent four seasons with the Steelers, so Harbaugh is familiar with him.

"I felt like the hair on the back of my neck stood up when I saw him over there, you know? He's a big dude," Harbaugh said. "So, yes, he's coming back from the Achilles injury he had with my brother [Chargers coach Jim Harbaugh]. And he looked good in the workout. You know, he's not back 100 percent. He's not in football shape yet. So, if we are able to do something, it'll be a process. But that would be a guy that has got a lot of experience. He's a decorated vet."

Harris has rushed for 1,000 yards four times in his five-year career. He appeared in only three games for the Chargers last season due to his Achilles injury.

MAXED OUT

Lefty back on IL, putting season in jeopardy as Rodón returns

By DAN MARTIN

So much for a healthy Yankees rotation.

After announcing that Carlos Rodón would return from the IL and start Tuesday's series opener against the Orioles in Baltimore, the Yankees placed fellow lefty Max Fried on the 15-day IL with a bone bruise in his left elbow.

It's the same injury that sidelined Fried for more than two months earlier this year, meaning the 32-year-old's season is in jeopardy.

Fried last pitched Thursday, when he held Seattle to one run over five innings in a 1-0 loss.

He pitched very well in four of his five outings since his return from the IL, adding another top-tier arm to a rotation that had gotten Gerrit Cole back and seen the emergence of Cy Young candidate Cam Schlichter.

The hope had been that Rodón, who had been out since late June with left elbow inflammation, would come back and join a fearsome rotation that had kept the Yankees in comfortable playoff position despite the offense providing little since Aaron Judge went down

with a fractured rib at the end of May.

With Rodón healthy again, the Yankees appeared set to move either another left-hander, Ryan Weathers, or Will Warren to the bullpen.

Rodón instead takes Fried's spot.

Rodón underwent elbow surgery in the offseason and didn't make his season debut until May. He was inconsistent in nine starts before hitting the IL again in late June with what was termed "heavy elbow inflammation."

Rodón is expected to be on a limited pitch count Tuesday, with Warren potentially pushed back to Wednesday against the Orioles, followed by Cole.

The loss of Fried again puts more pressure on the rest of the rotation, which has already been asked to do more than its fair share, as the offense has put up some of the worst numbers in the majors in the wake of injuries to not only Judge, but Cody Bellinger and Giancarlo Stanton.

While Fried has been effective when healthy this season — including a career-low WHIP through 15 starts — he has posted his lowest

strikeout ratio since 2020.

Fried has also thrown just 86 $\frac{1}{3}$ innings this season, a year after posting a career-best 195 $\frac{1}{3}$ innings, plus another 9 $\frac{1}{3}$ in the playoffs.

Prior to last season — which was interrupted by a blister on Fried's throwing hand — he'd never thrown 185 $\frac{1}{3}$ innings in a regular season.

That 2022 regular season was followed by just one postseason start.

Fried is in the second season of an eight-year, \$218 million contract, the richest deal ever signed by a left-handed pitcher.

When he suffered the bone bruise earlier in the season, the Yankees said Fried's ulnar collateral ligament was undamaged.

He still didn't return for over 10 weeks. A similar timeline would keep Fried out at least until the start of the World Series.

dmartin@nypost.com



Taxed bullpen poses threat to playoff ambitions

By DAN MARTIN

YANKEES NOTES

The Yankees have taxed most of their significant bullpen arms a lot this season — more than most other contenders.

Not only did lefty Brent Headrick enter Monday with the most games pitched of anyone in the majors (63), Fernando Cruz came in ninth and Tim Hill 15th.

And closer David Bednar has thrown 54 $\frac{1}{3}$ innings with 38 games to go. He's never pitched more than the 67 $\frac{1}{3}$ innings he did with the Pirates in 2023 — and Pittsburgh didn't make the

playoffs that year.

It's that kind of workload that made it even more surprising when the Yankees didn't add a reliever at the Aug. 3 trade deadline, though general manager Brian Cashman said he tried.

Considering where the Yankees want to go, the numbers are alarming, especially when you look at what the Dodgers did last year on their way to another World Series title and are doing again this year.

A year ago, the Dodgers didn't have any relievers in the top 25 in games pitched. This year, only **Alex Vesia** is in the top 25 — tied for 20th with 55 appearances, and he's thrown just 42 $\frac{1}{3}$ innings.

► It's no secret that **Heliot Ramos** has been bad at the plate since arriving in a trade from the Giants at the deadline.

The outfielder has the sixth-worst OPS in that stretch.

But since July 8, he's been even worse, with an OPS of .490 entering play Monday.

Only one player with a qualifying number of plate appearances has been worse.

The 26-year-old right-handed hitter hasn't hit lefties as well as in the past. Because of the absence of **Cody Bellinger** and **Aaron Judge**, Ramos has also been asked to play against righty pitching.

He replaced **Jasson Domínguez** on the roster after Domínguez failed to produce from either side of the plate at an acceptable level.

In his past five games with Triple-A Scranton/Wilkes-Barre,

Domínguez is 1-for-17 with two walks and five strikeouts while getting starts at all three outfield positions.

► If **Jazz Chisholm Jr.** is going to snap out of his lengthy slump, Tuesday may be the time to do it. Baltimore is scheduled to start right-hander **Shane Baz**. In his career, Chisholm is 5-for-9 with a double and a homer against Baz.

Chisholm wasn't in Sunday's lineup against Toronto, as **José Caballero** started at second base and sparked the offense in a win.

ONE STEP FORWARD, ONE STEP BACK: Just as the Yankees are set to welcome Carlos Rodón (inset) back to their rotation Tuesday, the Bombers were dealt another blow with Max Fried heading back to the IL with a bone bruise in his left elbow.

Jason Szenes

McLean gets some help for another quality start

ESCAPE ARTIST: Seven straight batters reached base against Nolan McLean in the first two innings Monday — yet only one run scored before the Mets pitcher clamped down.

Corey Sipkin

By MIKE PUMA

Nolan McLean allowed seven consecutive batters to reach base in the first and second innings Monday night.

Only one run scored over that stretch.

It was a charmed life indeed for the right-hander, who watched two other rookies — Carson Benge and A.J. Ewing — combine to nail three runners at the plate in the Mets' 2-1 victory over the Padres at Citi Field.

"That fires me up," McLean said. "It's saving not only the team runs, but me as well."

McLean survived the rocky terrain to pitch six innings, allowing one earned run on six hits with four walks and three strikeouts. Jonathan Pintaro, Nate Lavender and Daniel Duarte handled the final three innings, scoreless.

Benge threw out Jake Cronenworth and Manny Machado at the plate in succession to conclude the first inning. In the frame, McLean surrendered four straight singles after snagging Fernando Tatis Jr.'s line-drive comebacker.

McLean was spotted a 2-0 lead in the bottom of the first inning on Bo Bichette's RBI single and Luis Robert Jr.'s sacrifice fly.

In the second, McLean walked Xander Bogaerts (his second walk of the inning) to load the bases with nobody out after drilling Gavin Sheets. McLean escaped, allowing one run, after fielding a comebacker, throwing home for the force and then getting Tatis to fly out for an RBI. But the big play was Ewing scooping up Cronenworth's single and throwing out Bogaerts at the plate to conclude the inning.

McLean's start was his 10th in his past 11 in which he pitched at least six innings. It was also his 12th start in his past 14 of allowing two earned runs or fewer. Over that

stretch, he's pitched to a 2.55 ERA.

"He was a little lucky at the outset," interim manager Andy Green said. "But the competitor that he is, he didn't let his first two innings dictate the next four. He was really good from that point."

McLean pitched to soft contact early in the first inning when he surrendered four straight singles.

"Some pretty unlucky hits early from a how-hard-they-were-hit standpoint," McLean said. "I had a hard time getting a grip on the ball early in the game. I was able to find it a little bit later, which helped me get through it."

mpuma@nypost.com

Stearns: Surge hasn't changed Green plan

By MIKE PUMA

METS NOTES

The recent surge by the Mets hasn't changed president of baseball operations David Stearns' plans to conduct a managerial search after the season.

Stearns said Monday he still expects that interim manager Andy Green will return to the front office next season. Green was the Mets vice president for player development before replacing fired manager Carlos Mendoza in the dugout in June.

The Mets have won 10 of

their past 13 games. Overall, they are 23-22 under Green's guidance.

"My expectation, Andy's expectation, is he's going to rejoin the front office, and I have no reason to believe otherwise right now," Stearns said before the Mets' 2-1 win over the Padres at Citi Field.

Are there any qualities Green has displayed that will inform Stearns as he looks to fill the position?

"When we get to that point, I will be able to talk more broadly and holistically about what we would be looking for in the next manager," Stearns said. "I don't think right now is the right time to have those conversations."

Green's familiarity with the young Mets players has been beneficial, according to Stearns.

"They know him, he knows them," Stearns said. "He also has some familiarity with our veteran players and that wasn't completely new

to anyone as well. I think any time a manager steps into a new role, having those pre-existing relationships is definitely beneficial."

➤ **Jorge Polanco** has played only two games on defense after arriving last winter as the primary first baseman. But Stearns said he doesn't necessarily have to see Polanco, who has been slowed by ankle ailments, play the position this season to form an opinion for next year.

"I think the most impor-

tant thing for [Polanco] is to get him on a path where he is physically in a much better place in 2027 than he has been this year, and that's our focus," Stearns said.

➤ **Luis Robert Jr.** returned to center field a day after starting his first major league game in left field. Robert didn't receive any chances in the field Sunday. The next step in the progression for Robert will be receiving consecutive starts in left, according to Green.

MAN WITH THE



IT MIGHT turn out that the best outcome of this season for the Mets was missing out on Edwin Díaz and Kyle Tucker.

They tried, but both ended up with the Dodgers instead. The knee-jerk reaction was the rich got richer and the two-time champions were ruining baseball because they had no off switch when it came to payroll or adding stars — all reiterated earlier this month when Los Angeles traded for two-time defending AL Cy Young winner Tarik Skubal.

Yet, over the weekend, both Díaz (three blown saves in his past five outings and an overall 10.66 ERA) and Tucker were booed vociferously at Dodger Stadium. Manager Dave Roberts benched Tucker on Saturday because his home performance has been horrendous. Back in the lineup Sunday, Tucker completed an 0-for-19 homestand and made a key error that exacerbated an inefficient outing by Skubal.

The Dodgers lost the game, dropping three of four to the Brewers. Roberts followed by publicly airing how substandard he has found the offense and defense the past six weeks. Now, these are the Dodgers. They went 0-6 against the Brewers last regular season, then swept them in the NLCS. They will head into these playoffs as large favorites to win a third straight title, and Díaz, Tucker and especially Skubal are talented enough to have huge October moments.

But this was offered as a reminder that the Mets under Steve

Mets must hope Stearns can overcome mistakes — just like Dodgers prez did

Cohen ownership keep striving to be the East Coast Dodgers. And the best things that have happened under Cohen include being outbid by the Dodgers for Trevor Bauer, Díaz and Tucker.

That the Dodgers have overcome a horrible mistake in Bauer and potentially now more with Díaz and Tucker speaks to an infrastructure and culture built over time by Andrew Friedman, who was the forerunner of what Cohen was going for with David Stearns — an executive who had thrived on a shoestring in a small market (Tampa) and was now going to be Moneyball with money.

Except Friedman, upon taking over after the 2014 season, walked into a team that had won the NL West the past two seasons, had co-aces in Clayton Kershaw and Zack Greinke, established quality corner infielders Adrián González and Justin Turner, and near-ready elite prospects ready to perform instantly in Joc Pederson, Corey Seager and Julio Uriás.

Behind the scenes, Friedman created a powerhouse. But he was making plenty of mistakes. In 2016, he acquired a forgettable setup man named Josh Fields for a player from his academy in the Dominican Republic named Yor-



dan Alvarez. This might sound familiar to frustrated current Mets fans, but Friedman did not want to give long-term contracts, especially to starters. He let Greinke go in free agency after the 2015 season, believing he could be replaced with short deals for veterans like Brett Anderson, Scott Kazmir and Brandon McCarthy.

The Dodgers kept winning, but Friedman was regularly lambasted in Los Angeles by fans and media because his teams could not win the organization's first championship since 1988. He was criticized for trying to outsmart the system and favoring analytics. But he was establishing a sustainable player development foundation and learning on the job to seize the moment when great players became available like Shohei Ohtani, Mookie Betts and Freddie Freeman — aided by the finances and locale. There was a championship in 2020, more playoff heartache and then consecutive titles in 2024

and 2025. And Friedman rightfully is viewed as a Cooperstown-bound executive. He is the standard at this.

There are still mistakes. But they are overcome by the overall institution.

You see where this is going. Stearns came from his own small-market success in Milwaukee for an owner whose vision was to create the East Coast Dodgers. He did not inherit a winning team or as much talent as Friedman, yet he duplicated many of the mistakes. It has left the Mets incredibly disappointing the past two years and Stearns feeling the heat over whether he is capable of making the organization a sustainable winner — cue the “too smart for his own good” and “overly analytical” critiques.

It is hard to know in real time if Stearns is learning what works best in the Mets ecosystem — for example, they might have escaped Díaz/Tucker, but the counter of Devin Williams/Bo Bichette was costly in all ways. Is it possible that Stearns is best off returning to a comfort zone where money is not the first route to problem-solving — which might be forced upon him anyway if MLB actually gets a salary cap?

And you also would have to be-

lieve that behind the scenes, Stearns, completing his third year in charge, has built an apparatus that will constantly provide solutions. For example, the Dodgers have drafted fine and done well internationally. But where Friedman's group has done a great job — even while winning at the highest level — is trading for prospects whom they then greatly improve. The two keys to obtaining Skubal — Zyrir Hope and River Ryan — were acquired in relatively unheralded trades.

Three other top 100 prospects — outfielders Mike Sirota and James Tibbs III, and pitcher Christian Zazueta — arrived the same way. Close your eyes Yankees fans: Zazueta was acquired for Caleb Ferguson before the 2024 season.

Stearns just traded eight veterans for 12 prospects. Somewhere in that group needs to be the Mets' Hope and hope — a few chips to help the club by showing up or being shipped out for veteran help. It means faith that Stearns knows what he is doing, growing in the job, building a fortress that can overcome the kind of mistakes that submarined his 2026 Mets while the Dodgers with the failures of Díaz and Tucker just kept humming.

joel.sherman@nypost.com

GOLDEN GUN



Benge nails 2 at plate (and Ewing one more) as Amazin's top Padres for 4th straight win



ARMED FORCE: In the first inning of the Mets' 2-1 win over the Padres, Carson Benge threw out Jake Cronenworth (far left), who was tagged out trying to leap over Francisco Alvarez, and Manny Machado, who was gunned down for the final out of the frame. Francisco Lindor (inset) was all smiles as the Amazin's won their fourth straight.

By MIKE PUMA

Carson Benge's right arm might be the most exciting tool on the Mets roster this season.

That arm unloaded twice in the first inning Monday, setting the tone for the night: Two Padres were thrown out at the plate. Run prevention was also in full force an inning later when A.J. Ewing nailed a runner at the plate.

The defensive push led to a 2-1 victory, the Mets' 10th in their past 13 games.

METS	2	Boxscore
PADRES	1	Page 38

Before his third straight impressive performance defensively in right field, Benge was asked by The Post if he thought base runners might stop testing him.

"I hope not," Benge said. "That is one of the parts of my game that I am prouder about is being able to show off whenever I can. It's real fun."

Benge nailed Jake Cronenworth at the plate on Ty France's one-out single in the first. The ensuing batter, Jackson Merrill, singled in front of Benge, who unleashed another gem and threw out Manny Machado at the plate. It marked the first time in franchise history an outfielder threw out two runners at the plate in the same inning.

The display gave Benge four outfield assists over the past three games and nine this season (which ranks first among National League right fielders).

"The first one was pretty cool, but the inning wasn't over yet," Benge said. "So being able to nail him for the third out was pretty special."

Such throws have likely placed the 23-year-old Benge in the Gold Glove conversation in right field. Benge also figures to receive consideration in NL Rookie of the Year balloting, bolstered by a .750 OPS.

Benge's 2.4 bWAR entering Monday ranked third among NL rookies, behind JJ Wetherholt and TJ Rumlfield. On the defensive level, Benge rates

ON DECK: vs. Padres
Tuesday, 7:10 p.m., SNY, WHSQ (880 AM)

LHP Zac Thornton
2026 stats: 3-3, 2.78 ERA
Career vs. SDP: First start
Last start: Wed., at ATL; 6 IP, 3 ER, 2 SO

LHP Robbie Ray
2026 stats: 10-7, 3.28 ERA
Career vs. NYM: 5-2, 3.14 ERA
Last start: Wed., vs. MIL; 4 IP, 2 ER, 3 BB

PITCH BREAKDOWN
29% Cutter
25% 4-Seamer
15% Slider

PITCH BREAKDOWN
33% 4-Seamer
24% Slider
18% Change

UP NEXT

WEDNESDAY: vs. Padres, 1:10 p.m., SNY, WHSQ
RHP Robert Stock vs. RHP Michael King
FRIDAY: at White Sox, 7:40 p.m., WPIX, WHSQ
TBD vs. TBD

INJURY REPORT
■ **Juan Soto** (calf) and **Devin Williams** (shoulder) both intend to play again this season but are still weeks away from potentially rejoining the team.

as average in range (at zero outs above average, according to Statcast). But his arm value and arm strength rank in MLB's 95th and 98th percentiles, respectively.

"I think he's put himself at the forefront of the Gold Glove conversation and the Rookie of the Year," said Mets bench coach Kai Correa. "If he's not in either of those, I am not sure what we are doing."

Benge's defensive highlights over the weekend included racing down Dylan Crews' shot to right field Sunday — he collided with the fence after the catch. Benge had a sliding catch on Daylen Lile's fly to right later in the game. On Saturday, he nailed Crews attempting to score from third on a fly to right. A day later, Brady House got thrown out by Benge attempting to race from first to third.

Correa noted that Benge has moved around the outfield this season to accommodate other players, but it hasn't appeared to stunt his growth in right.

"The second thing is, everyone can say it and talk about arm strength," Correa said. "But to have the consistency and quick release

and be accurate — he is making 98 mph throws on the bag, on the plate, long hops on the fly. So, the consistency of accuracy at that arm strength is a pretty special weapon, and then the athleticism to complete plays: dive, slide and jump. He is really the total package out there."

Benge admitted to receiving a thrill watching the replays of his best throws.

"Some of them, they get up there that I throw pretty hard and they are one-hop strikes and they are pretty fun to watch," Benge said. "I feel like I have always had it. I feel like I have always been pretty accurate, know when to hit the cutoff man for the most part and know whenever it's OK to let it fly a little bit."

Benge's assessment of his outfield play overall?

"I have felt like I've gotten better," he said. "I have felt like there's easy plays that I haven't made, and I know I can still get better on reads and different things like that. But overall, I am pretty satisfied with how it's continued to grow throughout the year."

mpuma@nypost.com



'HE LOOKS THE PART'

By DAN MARTIN

About 10 days before George Lombard Jr. was called up by the Yankees, a longtime American League executive who'd seen the shortstop the previous week was asked if Lombard was ready for the majors.

"If anyone doesn't think he's ready right now, they don't know what they're watching," the exec said. "They should get another job."

Two weeks into his major league career, Lombard has provided plenty of evidence that he was, indeed, "ready right now."

"Obviously, I'm not surprised," the exec said Monday. "He just looks the part. Always has. There are going to be ups and downs, but he's built for this. All of it."

And it's a good thing for the Yankees that he is.

Because since his call-up

Lombard displays a readiness that belies his youth

from Triple-A Scranton/Wilkes-Barre on Aug. 4 — a day after the trade deadline — you can make an argument that he's been their best player.

In the 11 games since he's joined the team, Lombard has the second-highest OPS (.817). Only Trent Grisham's .925 is higher.

"He's settled in there a little better than I expected," one National League scout said of Lombard, who reached base twice Sunday against Toronto's AL Cy Young candidate, Dylan Cease. "Especially since the rest

of the offense is tanking."

What hasn't shocked anyone, though, is Lombard's work with his glove.

He immediately stabilized an infield that has questions at first base, with Ben Rice and Luis García Jr. playing regularly, as well as at second with the mistake-prone Jazz Chisholm Jr.

While Ryan McMahon remains solid at third, some scouts have seen regression from him as well, which has been mitigated by Lombard's presence.

"That's what really good

Jeter's shadow receding,

THERE were a lot of elements to that perfect storm of 1996, when Derek Jeter easily settled into his role as a fixture at shortstop.

The Yankees had plenty of veterans to bear many of the early burdens. The manager, Joe Torre, offered a preternatural feel for young talent, having been a hotshot kid himself once.

There was, of course, this: Jeter was highly skilled on both sides of the ball, blessed with a natural gift for leadership at a position where that is a bountiful asset.

All of that is true. But so is this:

Derek Jeter didn't have to worry about following Derek Jeter.

By 1996, it had been 15 years since Bucky Dent had been an All-Star shortstop, and

while Dent hit one forever home run and caused a lot of swooning among distaff Yankees fans of the day, it wasn't like there were a million kids all across the boroughs and the suburbs imitating his batting stance (or even rushing to Modell's to snap up No. 20 jerseys).

By '96, Tony Kubek was far better known as a broadcaster than as a four-time All-Star shortstop. By '96, it had been 40 years since Phil Rizzuto fielded his final ground ball and then took the elevator to

the WPIX booth.

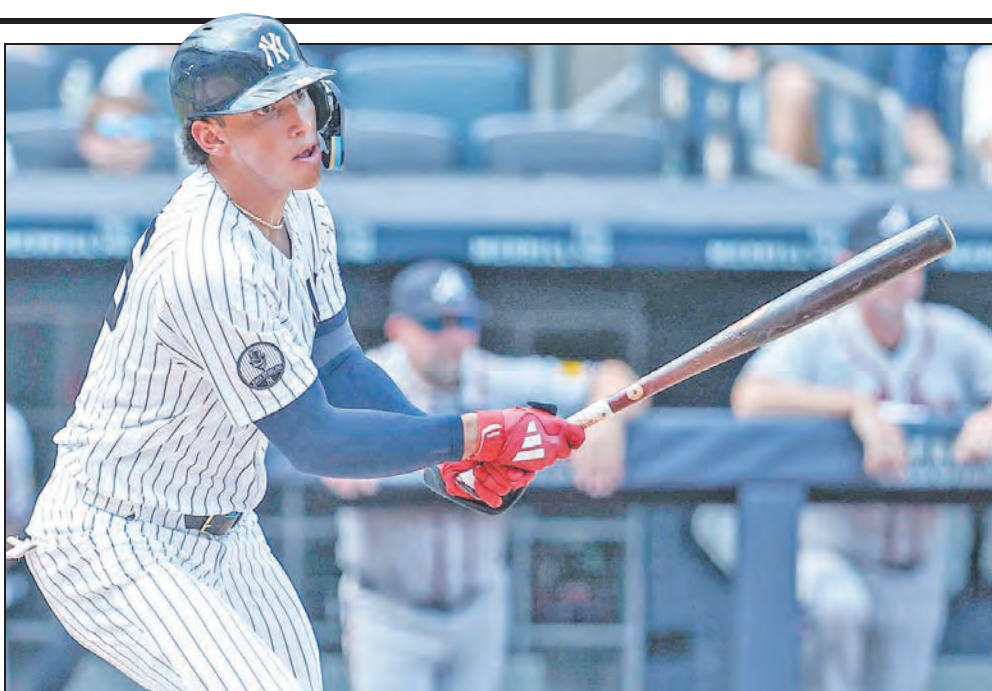
These were the regular Yankees shortstops from when Dent fell out of George Steinbrenner's favor in 1982 to when Jeter won the job in Tampa in the spring of 1996:

Roy Smalley.
Bobby Meacham.
Andre Robertson.



Montefiore Einstein

Official Hospital of the New York Yankees



HE'S GOT GAME: At the plate, in the field and with a general swagger, 21-year-old George Lombard Jr. has looked like a major leaguer through the first two weeks of his highly anticipated call-up to the big leagues.

Imagn Images (2); Jason Szenes

shortstops do," the NL scout said. "They make everyone around them better. A guy like Lombard, getting to so many ground balls and making it look easy, it takes pressure off of everyone else."

What has stood out to the scouts who had high expectations for the infielder who only turned 21 two months ago is the relative ease with which he's made the transition to the major league level.

"The skill set was there," an NL scout said. "But there's always a learning curve. His has been very small. You'd think with the lineup struggling and so much of a spotlight on him, he might have been taken aback

a little. That hasn't been the case."

There was a baserunning mistake that cost the Yankees in Friday's loss to Seattle, but he's made just one error at shortstop.

He's held his own against right-handed pitching (.722 OPS), but has mostly struggled against fastballs.

Lombard also hasn't had the luxury of hitting in a lineup with Aaron Judge, Cody Bellinger or Giancarlo Stanton.

The Yankees hope that changes soon.

Instead of hitting eighth or ninth in the order, Lombard has been as high as fifth in a lineup that has crumbled in

Judge's absence.

The next step for the player drafted out of high school 26th overall by the Yankees in 2023 is to keep it up during the stretch run and into the postseason.

"That's the challenge when you bring someone up after [56] games in Triple-A," the NL scout said of Lombard's inexperience. "He's going to get tested quickly at the most important time of the year. That type of adjustment isn't easy. But so far, he's made a lot of things look pretty easy that aren't easy at all."

dan.martin@nypost.com

Fried to IL / P. 48-49



but no need for comparisons with rook

Wayne Tolleson.
Rafael Santana.
Alvaro Espinoza.
Andy Stankiewicz.
Spike Owen.
Mike Gallego.
Tony Fernández.

"If he hits adequately and fields his position," Torre said Opening Day 1996 in Cleveland, "then I think that will work out just fine."

A few hours later, Jeter revealed we could all expect more, much more, and he kept doing that for the better part of 18 years. But Jeter played his last game in 2014. Twelve years later, he is as much a part of Yankees history books as, say, Dave Winfield was in 1996, even if he doesn't make a beeline for Old-Timers' Day anymore.

There have been no fewer than five men who've replaced him since, from distinguished (Didi Gregorius had many fine mo-

ments there; Gleyber Torres often hinted at greatness) to disappointing (Anthony Volpe). And now, of course, we are 11 games into the George Lombard Jr. era, with his .270 batting average and his .984 fielding percentage and the vast open road that is his career to come.

And here's the thing: Lombard actually comes across as a player who would've been unbothered by the burden of following Jeter anyway. He has a cool demeanor and an unspoken I-belong-here gait that he has generally backed up by his play so far, with a few dazzling plays and a couple of key at-bats sprinkled into the mix. So far, so good for Lombard, at a time in his career when so far, so good ought to be the lone measuring stick.

But there is this, too:

Jeter's shadow should only be as long for him as Tino Martinez's (or even Lou Gehrig's) is to Ben Rice, or Roger Maris' (or even Babe Ruth's) is to Aaron Judge. He is part of a sacred lineage now, but not beholden to any one

member of it. That's life with the Yankees, and always will be: Eventually even the biggest boldface names retire. Eventually somebody comes along to make the position their own.

Sometimes it's Mickey Mantle replacing Joe DiMaggio. Sometimes it's Jerry Narron replacing Thurman Munson — but sooner or later, there's always been Jorge Posada waiting to take his place in the firmament.

The shadows recede for everyone. Even Derek Jeter, 12 years since his last at-bat as a Yankee. The last sentence that Red Smith ever wrote was this one: "Someday, there would be another Joe DiMaggio." Well, 45 years later, we're still waiting for that — but we did get to enjoy Bernie Williams for 16 years. That wasn't a bad option, as it turned out.

Will we ever get another Jeter? At this point, better to focus on something else. Watching the early chapters of George Lombard Jr.'s story will do just fine.

mvaccaro@nypost.com

Montefiore Einstein
Official Hospital of the New York Yankees



■ **Cody Bellinger** still looks like the first of the injured Yankees sluggers who will return, as the outfielder could begin a rehab assignment with Triple-A Scranton/Wilkes-Barre later this week. He is expected to need only a few games before he returns to the lineup after being sidelined by a left hamstring strain.



at Orioles

Tuesday, 6:35 p.m., YES, WFAN (660 AM, 101.9 FM)

LHP Carlos Rodón



2026 stats:
4-2, 3.30 ERA

Career vs. BAL:
2-3, 4.53 ERA

Last start:
June 28, at BOS;
5 IP, 1 H, 6 K

PITCH BREAKDOWN

44% 4-Seamer **24%** Slider **16%** Change

RHP Shane Baz



2026 stats:
4-12, 4.00 ERA

Career vs. NYY:
0-2, 7.00 ERA

Last start:
Wed., at MIN;
3 IP, 9 H, 5 ER

PITCH BREAKDOWN

34% 4-Seamer **33%** Curve **16%** Cutter

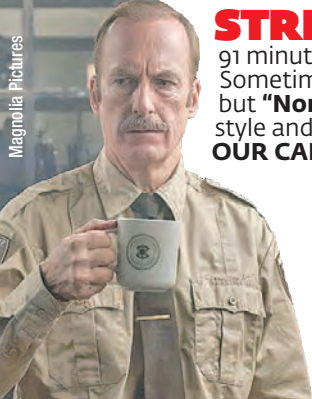
UP NEXT

WEDNESDAY: at Orioles, 6:35 p.m., Prime Video, WFAN
LHP Max Fried vs. RHP Chris Bassitt
THURSDAY: at Orioles, 6:35 p.m., YES, WFAN
RHP Gerrit Cole vs. RHP Kyle Bradish

Montefiore Einstein

Official Hospital of the New York Yankees

Magnolia Pictures



STREAM IT OR SKIP IT

91 minutes of ridiculous, anarchic violence. Sometimes that's good and sometimes that's bad, but **"Normal"** (HBO Max) pulls it off with enough style and skill to be... *is endearing* the right word?
OUR CALL: STREAM IT



DECIDER

WHAT TO WATCH

The new season of **"Reacher"** is an absolute blast. The fourth installment of this Prime Video favorite, once again, inexplicably, begins with multiple dummies seeing Reacher, a man who looks like an actual mountain constructed of muscles, sarcastic quips, and enough Creatine to fill the grandest of canyons, and being like, "Yeah, let's go try to fight that LITERAL GIANT."

WHAT TO WATCH. WHEREVER YOU WATCH

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

'The McBee Dynasty's Galyna Saltkovska vows to 'stay away' from Masha Petrova

By KAREN KEMMERLE

The McBee Dynasty: **Real American Cowboys** star Galyna Saltkovska is ready for her next chapter. Shocked by her sudden breakup with Steve McBee Sr., Saltkovska was rightfully devastated when she found out he had been cheating on her with her (now former) best friend, Masha Petrova. She will never forgive Petrova for her betrayal, and Saltkovska has vowed to "stay away from any situations involving her."

"She's not worth it," said Saltkovska. She added, "My life is more important. I have to protect myself, my daughter [Erena Chaples], and our future."

Thanks to her newfound resolve and her dedication to the business, Saltkovska is finally proving to the McBees that she was always there

for the right reasons.

"They can see that I wasn't just on the farm for my relationship with Steve," said Saltkovska. "I always wanted to be part of the family." As CFO of McBee Farm & Cattle Co, Saltkovska is one of the people that Steven McBee Jr. and his brothers Jesse McBee and Cole McBee depend on the most to keep the company up and running—even if they had a problem with her work-life balance.

"I had to start drawing boundaries," said Saltkovska. "It's okay to focus on yourself."

Saltkovska is proud of her business partners as they navigate this tumultuous time in both the business and their personal lives.

"I'm very proud of everything that Steven has been doing recently," said Saltkovska when asked if the boys can avoid becoming like their father in terms of their relationships with women. "He is

changing his behavior and acknowledging the things he has done wrong in past relationships." If Steven or any of his brothers ever need guidance, Saltkovska will no doubt be there for them.

Saltkovska visited the DECIDER studio to discuss the series.

DECIDER: Galyna, what has it been like watching this season back for you?

GALYNA SALTKOVSKA: It has been a much better experience for me. Everybody knows that I had a rough couple of years. For me, this season was about showing who I am outside the relationship I once had with Steve while continuing to support the family and the business.

I don't know what you've been seeing online, but I've noticed that fans are giving you a lot of support this season. Are you glad it's clear to people that your intentions and your love for this family are genuine?

I really appreciate that so much. You're right. I've gotten so much support. I did not expect that, but I'm so grateful. Steve Sr.'s going to prison was obviously emotional for everyone.

Did you get to say goodbye to



Galyna Saltkovska (above) stars on "The McBee Dynasty: Real American Cowboys" Season 3 with Alli McBee (below left).

Brian Zak/NY Post

him before he left?

Yes, we all did. I obviously did not go with him and his family on the bus. I wanted to make sure that they had their space.

Steve's girlfriend Masha Petrova has been testing you this season.

I call her "Mashed Potatoes" now [laughs].

You can call her whatever you want! Although you've had some dustups in the past—and I'm putting that kindly—you've handled yourself very well and allowed people to see that she is the real instigator. Do you

think you'll ever let her get under your skin again?

She definitely knows how to get my blood boiling. That's why I stay away from any situations involving her now. It's not worth it. She's not worth it. My life is more important. I have to protect myself, my daughter, and our future. So, I'm passing on mashed potatoes, thanks [laughs]. She's in the past now.

What can you tease about the rest of the season?

All I can say is that the season finale is going to be a reality TV spectacle. It's definitely something that you do not want to miss.

Netflix



TRENDING NOW

"Two marriages threaten to eat each other alive" in **"The Diplomat"** Season 4, Netflix teased, as they dropped the Season 4 teaser trailer and unveiled some first-look pictures of the cast. Starring **Keri Russell** (left), Season 4 of "The Diplomat" premieres on Oct. 15.



WHAT'S NEW

ON E!

"Cocktail Wars," a new reality competition show.

ON NETFLIX

"Kelsey Cook: Happy Hour," the comedian's first Netflix stand-up special (left).

What's on Tonight



ACTION

Kong: Skull Island: 3 p.m. on TNT. Tom Hiddleston, Samuel L. Jackson. A team of scientists venture into the domain of the mighty Kong and must fight to survive.



BIOGRAPHY

Selena: 8 p.m. on VH1. Jennifer Lopez, Edward James Olmos. A Texas-born Tejana singer who rose from cult status to performing at the Astrodome.



THRILLER

Bad Boys II: 10:30 p.m. on AMC. Martin Lawrence, Will Smith. Miami narcotics cops Mike and Marcus investigate the flow of Ecstasy into Florida.

Tuesday August 18, 2026

Evening	SP	C	F	6:30pm	7:00pm	7:30pm	8:00pm	8:30pm	9:00pm	9:30pm	10:00pm	10:30pm	11:00pm	11:30pm	
2 WCBS	2	2	2	CBS Evening News	Inside Edition	Entertainment Tonight	NCIS: Knick-Knack (R)		NCIS: Origins: Lean On Me (R)		NCIS: Origins: Feelin' Alright? (R)		CBS News 11pm	(11:35) Comics	
4 WNBC	4	4	4	NBC Nightly News	News 4 New York at 7	Access Hollywood	America's Got Talent: Quarterfinals 1				Password	Password: Bodaciously	News 4 New York at 11	(11:35) Tonight Show	
5 WNYW	5	5	5	(6:00) 6 O'Clock News	Extra	TMZ	Kitchen Nightmares: Boodles Restaurant		(9:02) Beat Shazam: Girl Power Hour!		The 10 O'Clock News		Good Night New York	Feud Favorites (R)	
7 WABC	7	7	7	ABC World News	Jeopardy!: Tournament	Wheel of Fortune (R)	RJ Decker: Even Walls Fall Down (R)		Will Trent: Where'd You Come From (R)		Will Trent: Be of Service (R)		News	(11:35) Kimmel Live	
9 WWOR	9	9	9	Family Feud (R)	Family Feud (R)	Family Feud (R)	The News on My 9		Chicago P.D.: Captive		Family Feud (R)	Family Feud (R)	Chicago P.D.: Confidential		
11 WPIX	11	11	11	(6:00) PIX11 News at 6	Seinfeld: Accountant	The Big Bang Theory	WWE NXT: from WWE Performance Center in Orlando, Fla.. Live.				PIX11 News at Ten		New York Nightcap	Seinfeld: The Shoes	
13 WNET	13	13	13	BBC News America	The PBS News Hour		Finding Your Roots: Westward Bound (R)		American Masters: Starring Dick Van Dyke: Celebrate the life and career of legendary actor Dick Van Dyke. (R)					Amanpour	
21 WLIW	21	21	21	(6:00) News	My Life	(7:45) Father Brown	Murder Mysteries: Fairies		Signora Volpe: Truffles and Treachery		BBC News		The Day		
25 WNYE	25	22	25	The Chavis	County	Voces NYC	Walkin NYC	Discovery	Never Knew	Future	New York	Secrets NY	Lessons of Basketball		
31 WPXN	31	3	531	(6:00) Fire	Chicago Fire: Best Friend		Chicago Fire		Chicago Fire		Chicago Fire: Then Nick		Chicago Fire		
41 WXTV	41	6	41	N Univisi	La rosa de Guadalupe		Tan Cerca de Ti, Nace el		Guardián de mi Vida		Corazon de Oro		Noticias	N Univisio	
47 WNJU	47	16	12	Noticias	Top Chef VIP		El Señor de los Cielos		Lejos de Ti		Noticiero		Noticias		
55 WLNY	55	10	10	Perfect (R)	Last Man	Last Man	News 8pm		48 Hours: Jane Dorotik		Judge Judy	Judge Judy	Neighbor.	Neighbor.	
A&E	46	46	181	Neighbor	Parent War	Parent War	Parent War	Parent War	Parent War	Parent War	Parent War	Parent War	Parent War	Parent War	
AMC	54	43	231	(5:30) My Cousin Vinny (1992, Comedy)			Bad Boys (1995, Action) Martin Lawrence. R ★★½				Bad Boys II (2003) Martin Lawrence. ★★½				
BBCAM	71	101	189	The Karate Kid, Part II (1986, Action) Pat Morita. ★★½			Footloose (1984, Drama) Kevin Bacon. PG ★★½				Law & Order: Hands Free				
BET	37	54	270	(6:00) Feud	Celebrity Family Feud		Celebrity Family Feud		Ms. Pat	Comic View	Martin	Martin	Martin	Martin	
BRAVO	18	44	185	Girls Trip	(6:59) Ultimate Girls Trip		Housewives		Housewives: Loch Mess		(10:06) Ultimate Girls Trip		(11:06) Real Housewives		
CNBC	15	24	102	Money	Shark Tank		Shark Tank		Shark Tank		Shark Tank		Shark Tank		
CNN	78	25	100	(6:00) Lead	To Be Announced		To Be Announced		Election Night in America		To Be Announced		To Be Announced		
COMEDY	45	50	190	Family Guy	Family Guy		Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy	
DISC	66	27	120	(6:00) Homestead Rescue: Intervention			Homestead Rescue: Intervention: Harsh Reality			Homestead Rescue: Intervention: Wylde Mountain					
DISNEY	49	31	250	Big City	Big City	Big City	Beauty and the Beast (1991) G ★★		Phineas		Phineas	Kiff	Miraculous	Miraculous	
E!	24	51	196	Mother (R)	Mother (R)	Mother (R)	Mother (R)	Mother (R)	Mother (R)	Mother (R)	Cocktail	Cocktail	Cocktail (R)	Cocktail (R)	
ESPN	28	36	70	Countdown	WNBA Basketball: Indiana Fever at Toronto Tempo from Coca-Cola Coliseum. Live.									SportsCenter	
ESPN2	29	35	74	Football	NFL Live		NFL's Game		30 for 30: The Tuck Rule		E60: Above The Tide - 20 Years After Katrina			E60	
FBN	43	106	117	Bottom	Kudlow (R)		To Be Announced		To Be Announced		To Be Announced		To Be Announced		
FNC	44	26	118	Spc. Rpt.	The Ingraham Angle		Jesse Watters Primetime		Hannity		Gutfeld!		Fox News @ Night		
FOOD	50	97	164	Chopped	Chopped		Beat Bobby Flay		Kitchen Undercover		Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	
FREE	38	49	199	The Princess Diaries (2001, Comedy) Julie Andrews.			The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement (2004) Anne Hathaway.			The 700 Club (R)					
FS1	400	99	83	(6:00) Greatest Games: Indiana Hoosiers at Ohio State Buckeyes.			SPEED with Harvick		Kevin Harvick's		Indycar NICS Replay.				
FX	100	40	53	(5:30) Avengers: Infinity War (2018, Action) Robert Downey Jr. ★★½			Avengers: Endgame (2019, Action) Robert Downey Jr. PG-13 ★★								
HALL		191	240	Snowkissed (2021, Comedy) Jen Lilley.			Two for Tee (2026, Romance) Janel Parrish.			Golden		Golden	Golden	Golden	
HGTV	64	98	165	Fabulous	Love It or List It		Love It or List It		(9:01) Extreme Buyers		Hunters	Hunters	Hunters	Hunters	
HIST	40	47	128	The Secret	The Secret: Hot Pursuit		The Secret: Heating Up		The Secret of Skinwalker		The Secret	The Proof Is Out There		Proof Out	
ID	23	171	123	Nightmare	Your Worst Nightmare		Evil Lives Here		Psychopath	Psychopath	48 Hours on ID		Psychopath	Psychopath	
LIFE	62	45	140	Castle	Castle: Flowers Grave		Castle: Nanny McDead		Castle: Hedge Fund		Castle: Hath No Fury		(11:03) Castle: Chill Goes		
MeTV	33	33	3	M*A*S*H	M*A*S*H	M*A*S*H	Andy	Andy	Loves Ray.	Loves Ray.	Golden	Golden	Burnett	P. Mason	
MSG	27	87	78	(5:00) NHL	NHL Hockey				Club 30		NHL Hockey				
MSG Plus	48	88	80	(6:00) To Be Announced: Program information is currently unavailable.											
MSNOW	14	23	103	Ari Melber	The Weeknight		All in with Chris Hayes		The Briefing Jen Psaki		Lawrence O'Donnell		The 11th Hour with Ali		
MTV	20	53	210	Caught Act	Caught In Act: I Saw You		Caught In Act: Unfaithful		Caught In Act (R)		Caught In Act (R)		Caught In Act (R)		
NATGEO	65	162	121	(6:00) Drain	Vikings: Rise (R)		Vikings: Rise (R)		Vikings: Rise (R)		Vikings: Rise (R)		Vikings: Rise (R)		
NICK	6	121	252	SpongeBob	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	Bang	Bang	Bang	Bang	
OWN	173	180	145	Deadline	Deadline: Tamron Hall		Deadline: Tamron Hall		Deadline: Tamron Hall		20/20 on OWN		20/20 on ID: Intersection		
PARMT	36	56	54	(6:00) Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore (2022, Adventure) Jude Law.			(9:25) Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone (2001, Fantasy) ★★½								
SNY	26	60	77	Pre Game	MLB Baseball: San Diego Padres at New York Mets from Citi Field. Live.					Post Game	Mets Specials			Sports	
SYFY	17	48	180	(6:00) F9 (2021, Action) Vin Diesel, Michelle Rodriguez. PG-13 ★★½			Cloud Atlas (2012, Drama) Tom Hanks. R ★★½								
TBS	8	39	52	Bang	Bang	MLB on TBS	MLB Baseball: Chicago White Sox at Chicago Cubs from Wrigley Field. Live.					MLB on TBS	The Office		
TCM	82	41	230	(6:00) The Way We Were (1973) PG ★★			Out of Africa (1985, Drama) Meryl Streep. PG ★★								
TLC	52	28	139	Jay & Pam	Baylen Out Loud (R)		Baylen Out Loud		Baylen Out Loud		(10:01) Jay & Pamela		(11:03) Little Singles (R)		
TNT	3	37	51	Ocean's Eleven (2001)		(7:45) The Equalizer (2014, Action) Denzel Washington, Marton Csokas. R ★★								Ocean's Eleven (2001) George Clooney.	
TVLAND	85	34	241	(6:24) Andy	Loves Ray.	Loves Ray.	Loves Ray.	Loves Ray.	(9:20) Loves Raymond		Loves Ray.	Loves Ray.	Queens	Queens	
USA	16	38	50	(6:00) SVU	Law & Order: SVU		Law & Order: SVU		Law & Order: SVU		Law & Order: SVU		Law & Order: SVU		
VH1	19	52	217	Wife/Kids	Wife/Kids		Selena (1997, Drama) Jennifer Lopez. PG ★★							The Social Network ★★½	
WE	59	42	149	Minds	Criminal Minds		Criminal Minds		Criminal Minds		Criminal Minds		Criminal Minds		
YES	53	89	76	MLB Baseball: New York Yankees at Baltimore Orioles. Live.					Postgame	YanksExtra	MLS Taped.				
HBO	511	301	400	(6:37) Ready Player One (2018, Science Fiction) Tye Sheridan.					Hard Knocks: Seahawks		Lanterns (R)		Hard Knocks (R)		
MAX	531	371	420	Death Cure		(6:57) It's Complicated (2009, Comedy) Meryl Streep.		(8:58) Adult Best Friends (2025)		The Watch (2012, Comedy) Ben Stiller.					
MGM Plus	595		395	In & Out (1997, Comedy) Kevin Kline.			Chicago (2003, Musical) Renée Zellweger. PG-13 ★★			The English Patient (1996, Drama) Ralph Fiennes. R					
PARSHO	551	321	365	(6:00) The Time Traveler's Wife (2009)			The Dutchman (2026) André Holland. R		(9:35) Body Cam (2020, Horror) R ★★		(11:15) Paid in Full (2002)				

\$1

A WEEK FOR 12 WEEKS

HOME DELIVERY

NEW SUBSCRIBER OFFER

A sweet deal on home delivery!

NYPost.com/JoinUs

or call 1-800-552-7678 code: **JoinUs**

Terms & conditions apply. Offer valid for new households that have not had New York Post home delivery in the past 60 days. After the introductory period, your subscription will automatically renew at the then prevailing rate until you cancel. Offer expires 9/30/2026.





TWO FOR THE THROW!

BENGE NAILS TWO AT PLATE — IN SAME INNING — AS METS WIN 4TH STRAIGHT / P. 50-51



TUESDAY, AUGUST 18, 2026

POST

www.nypost.com

The Best Mets In Town®

Max Fried is going back on the injured list with a bone bruise in his left elbow for the second time this season. The first injury cost him two months. He made five starts since returning July 22, but now there is no telling when — or if — one of the Yankees aces will be back this season.

PAGES
48-49

FRIED IT AND WEEP

Lefty's season in peril
as he heads back to
IL with bone bruise



Robert Sabo



BIG STEP FORWARD

NABERS DOES TEAM DRILLS FOR
FIRST TIME SINCE TEARING ACL



PAGES
46-47



3 4 2 3 0

0 91925 97031 8